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The other side of paradise

James Clifford

DEREK FREEMAN

Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth
379pp. Harvard University Press.
£11.95.
0674548302

BRAD SHORE

Sala'Ilua: A Samoan Mystery.
338pp. Columbia University Press.
\$18.20.
0231053827

the village of Sala'Ilua. But its subtitle refers also to the mystery of a way of life which embraces contradictory essences, indeed whose essence may be contradiction itself.

Professor Freeman, a distinguished Pacific ethnographer, has been inspired by recent developments in sociobiology. He is ready to cast doubt on all strictly cultural accounts of human behaviour. Dedicated to Karl Popper, Margaret Mead and Samoa presents itself as a rigorous, scientific "refutation". But ethnography is not a natural science, where one exception

falsify a powerful cultural fiction one must substitute a potent and persuasive counter-fiction.

Freeman begins by undermining Mead's research paradigm. In four chapters entitled "The Emergence of Cultural Determinism" he provides a sketchy intellectual history of the nature-nurture controversy during the decades preceding Mead's departure for Samoa in 1925. Franz Boas and his followers are engaged in a bitter controversy with the eugenicists of Francis Galton. Two explanations for the variations of human behaviour,

Freeman makes gestures towards a promising historicist argument that could situate these liberal assumptions in the utopian moment of the 1920s. But his central aim is to discredit the "Boasian paradigm", whose "absolute cultural determinism" he illustrates from the writings of Boas, A. L. Kroeber, Robert Lowie, and others. (Significantly, he is unable to catch Mead making a systematically determinist claim.) But Freeman's way with quotations - which are cut up small and woven into his own intensifying assertions - marks his history as tendentious. He cites only

the biological explanation of socio-cultural phenomena. (Typically, Freeman's citation hardens Kroeber's position by omitting "anti-reductionist".) It is now common among historians and sociologists of science to view competition for epistemological domains and objects of study as inseparable from the advance of knowledge. The interrelation of ideological and scientific, political and rational processes, particularly in the human sciences, is a focus of continuing debate. Freeman is either ignorant of this debate or chooses to ignore it. For him, the Boasian struggle to establish a cultural paradigm was simply ideological, a matter of extreme "doctrines" and "beliefs". But there is good reason to be sceptical of histories of science written by practitioners who confidently judge the excesses of their predecessors from the standpoint of a "more scientific paradigm". Freeman's new paradigm turns out to be only a series of prolegomena to a possible account of biological and cultural interaction. And his own book, under cover of a scientific "refutation", is itself deeply polemical, an attack on a stereotyped opponent, seeking to win space for a new approach.

In fact, Freeman never seriously confronts any major "culturalist" argument, and he ignores culturalism's most sophisticated modern forms, which are hermeneutic and semiotic. He trains his guns on a weak position, Mead's early Samoan research, long acknowledged in anthropological circles to be problematic. In his central ten chapters Freeman's pattern of argument becomes numbingly familiar. Each section begins with a few of Mead's most extreme generalizations, without giving any attention to her evidence, qualifications, or specific mode of analysis. These spare quotations are then followed with massed counter-examples drawn, uncritically, from the historical record and from Freeman's own fieldwork. Contrary to Mead's assertions, Samoan children may be violently punished, rape is common, intense status competition reigns, adolescent stress can lead to delinquency. But 170 pages of overkill merely show over and over what was already well known (and can easily be deduced from an alert reading of *Coming of Age in Samoa*), that Mead constructed a fresh, idealized picture, openly designed to propose



A Kwakiutl ceremonial curtain which depicts Sisiul, the double-headed serpent, beneath a rainbow, ravens and copper, from The Way of the Masks (249 pp. Cape. £15. 0 224 02081 1) by Claude Lévi-Strauss.

san, in principle, falsify an established truth. Ethnographies are complex, realistic fictions derived from research in historical circumstances that can never be fully controlled. A score of counter-examples may not discredit a convincingly illustrated portrait of a culture. The discordant facts may be seen to reflect merely a different village or island, a different epoch, research strategy, personal temperament, etc. (Freeman's refutation has already been challenged by anthropologists noting that he worked primarily in a different part of Samoa from Mead, and decades later.) To

"two fervently held half-truths", contend "for outright mastery". Mead, a student of Boas, is sent to Samoa to conduct an experiment that will establish once and for all the power of cultural over biological accounts. (Freeman's portrayal of the youthful Mead as little more than an agent of "Papa Franz" is, to say the least, condescending.) The good student fulfils her assignment by producing an anthropological classic, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, whose argument for the variability of the seemingly natural life-stage of adolescence quickly becomes liberal dogma.

What Freeman reveals is the struggle for a scientific paradigm. Boasians (like Durkheimians in France) had to fight to establish a domain of specifically "cultural" (or "social") facts. Kroeber saw the argument as "an anti-reductionist" proclamation of independence from the dominance of

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moral, practical lessons to the West. Freeman does not offer a balanced portrayal of Samoa, but is relentless, even obsessive, in heaping up instances of repression and violence. Clearly something more is getting expressed than simply the "darker side", as Freeman puts it, of Samoan life. In a revealing final page, he admits as much, countering Mead's "Apollonian" sense of cultural balance with biology's "Dionysian" human nature (essential, emotional, etc). But what is the scientific status of a "refutation" that is subsumed so neatly by a Western mythic opposition?

Freeman's strictures against Mead's fieldwork — her imperfect grasp of Samoan, her relatively brief stay, her reliance on a small group of informants — are to the point. But these limitations, have long been known, thanks to Mead's own frankness, and Freeman, ungenerously neglects to mention that many early classics of ethnography are vulnerable to similar strictures. Moreover, Freeman's own portrayal of Samoa indulges in the same sort of essentializing statement as Mead. He writes of a "Samoan ethos" based on courage and tenacity, of "a culture which extols violence". From time to time he quotes Samoans, who say things like "This country is indeed competitive". But as usual he cites only briefly, and his informants always agree with him in a rather literal way. By contrast, Bradt Shore quotes longer, more varied interpretations by Samoans. And he has devised an especially effective way of communicating the complexity of Samoan subjectivity. He will juxtapose a dozen or so statements on a topic, giving us voices with quite different stresses and accents — Samoan variations, rather than a Samoan truth.

Shore is constantly occupied with problems of cross-cultural equivalence, whereas Freeman uses terms and categories with little attention to their translatability. For example, he contradicts Mead's assertion that in Samoa "there is no room for guilt" by quoting a few Samoan statements which, in translation, contain the word "guilt" and by showing that there are occasions for the public admission of wrongdoing. An obviously problematic word and category, for which no Samoan equivalent or "semantic field"

is given, moves rather too smoothly from culture to culture.

This unconcern with problems of translation is most troubling in Freeman's use of comparative statistics. He contrasts British, American and Samoan "delinquency rates" without any interest in different definitions of "delinquency" built into his samples. He even manages to extract a delinquency rate for Samoan adolescent girls from Mead's anecdotal accounts of her twenty-five key informants. No one who takes statistical argument seriously will find these exercises compelling. Freeman's figures on Samoan rape have been prominently featured in journalistic accounts of his hook. (Perhaps each epoch finds a Samoa to correspond to its obsessions: the 1920s found sexual freedom, the 1960s rape.) From recent police records Freeman derives a level twice that of the United States, thus leading to a quotable assertion: "the Samoan rape rate is certainly one of the highest to be found anywhere in the world". However, Freeman casually evinces rates from around the globe without any concern for their questionable reliability, or for what rape actually means in different settings. By his own account Samoan rape is different from what, elsewhere, is a widespread pattern of sexual violence against women. It is associated with the forcing of virgins, and most of its victims are young girls. The frequent purpose of the assault (Samoan rape may involve only a surreptitious piercing of the hymen with the fingers) is to coerce an unwashed virgin into marriage. Well over half of Freeman's sample appears to be this sort of attack. He clearly brings out a violent aspect of Samoan sexuality played down by Mead. But the pseudo-scientific precision of his comparative figures and his loose equation of Samoan and American "rape" give serious pause.

Another source of doubt is Freeman's failure to discuss the issue of gender in his own and Mead's research. For key informants were adolescent girls. The informants he cites are overwhelmingly men; his statistics refer almost entirely to violence by males; and the aspects of Samoan culture he stresses — the formal, competitive arenas of status and rank —

are male-dominated. If Mead committed the error of generalizing information gained from her young female informants to "Samoa" as a whole, Freeman portrays Samoa in terms of male values and qualities. In the light of recent studies showing other Pacific cultures to be made up of distinct, if interrelated, male and female domains, it is at least curious that Freeman does not consider the gender issue. His own final summation of "The Samoan Ethos" highlights male qualities of competition, aggressiveness, courage and intensity in conflict. "The Samoans", like Thucydides' Greeks, "are as ashamed of being the second as they are proud of being the first". Margaret Mead, Freeman tells us, by ignoring the aggressive "darker side of Samoan life", turned her "complex human subjects into 'characterless non-entities'. Readers of *Coming of Age in Samoa*, in its way quite a complex human portrait, may suspect that what is at issue are different conceptions of "character".

Perhaps Freeman's most serious failure is a literary one. He never engages Mead as a writer, but pillages her works for simplistic conclusions and facts for "refutation". He ignores the way any cultural description (including his own) is an ensemble of anecdotes, narratives, interpretations, typical events and characters, allegories, partial arguments — in short, a complex rhetorical performance. Freeman sees none of this. After his laboured presentation of culture as a true-or-false test, it is a positive relief to take up *Salu'ula*, a portrait that tries to do justice to what Shore sees as a Samoan "passion for complexity". His version has room for Mead's balance and flexibility, as well as for Freeman's darker, more violent elements. The latter do not dominate, as they do in *Margaret Mead and Samoa*; and they are not made to appear as a return of the repressed, some elemental bottom line of biological human nature. Tension, passion, and aggressivity are always complex, mediated responses.

Shore writes: "To complicate and to elaborate are, in Samoa, to celebrate the *fa'a Samoa*, to enrich a world understood as multidimensional. Like a person, the social world is understood to possess many 'sides' and 'parts'

and is to be understood in terms of its contexts. The whole is not reducible to any simple menad, for such a simplification of structure is a kind of death." Shore portrays Samoan life as discontinuous, a series of "contexts" (a term that serves many purposes in his analysis and could bear more critical scrutiny). In passing, he clarifies a problem encountered, he says, by all fieldworkers in Samoa. Authoritative statements, even on non-controversial matters, have a way of being contradicted by other authorities, or by the same person in a new situation. One must become accustomed to a pervasive style of context-shifting, with conflicting truths often patterned as complementary oppositions.

Shore's dialectical viewpoint may help us account for the divergent Samoas of Freeman and Mead. In a remarkable chapter on the person, he proposes a Samoan equivalent to "know thyself": "take care of the relationship". It is likely that Mead's informants "took care of the relationship" with their ethnographer rather than, as Freeman suggests, deliberately misleading her. Outright fabrication, even in fun, could hardly go undetected over a six-month period by a highly observant fieldworker like Mead. But context-sensitive Samoans would quickly recognize the aspects of their culture Mead was interested in, elaborating at length on this "facet" of themselves. Mead believed, to the end of her life, and despite strong contrary evidence which she recognized, that her picture of Samoa was not a false

one. Shore's multi-contextual view suggests that she received and wrote a Samoan truth, but certainly not the truth of Samoans. Revealingly, Shore shows his own informants altering their views to accommodate a new situation, often that of his own presence and questions.

With the aid of Gregory Bateson's theory of "schizogenesis" Shore demonstrates how contradiction and paradox can be structured — without resolution — in characteristically Samoan ways. But even after this detailed, sophisticated account, *fa'a Samoa*, Samoan "culture", remains elusive. To make the incoherence of Samoan behaviour comprehensible, Shore has to mobilize a good deal of anthropological theory concerning "dual systems". He discovers an underlying "template for social order". Apparently, what makes Samoans Samoans is that they are — loveably and unconsciously — structuralists. The anthropological detective thus resolves to his satisfaction the Samoan mystery.

But in his *envoy*, Shore responds the case: "The fact that we could make intelligible the patterns that shape Samoan lives and even, perhaps, glimpse in them something of our own lives, points beyond Samoa to something else. But that is another, deeper, mystery." As ethnographers increasingly "look to their relations", they may come to understand the discipline, its explanations and allegories, as Shore does the *fa'a Samoa* — a double vision in terms of which they make themselves whole.

Infamous expansion

Hugh Brogan

STUART CREIGHTON MILLER

Benevolent Assimilation: The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1898-1903
340pp. Yale University Press. £10.50.
0 300 02697 8

The conquest of the Philippines has some claim to be the most disgraceful episode in American history, for not only was it as brutal as the wars against the Indians and the Vietnamese, it was absolutely wanton. Nothing was gained by victory over the Filipinos except a heavy responsibility and a major strategic liability. The United States threw away its own best traditions: one imperialist clerical denounced the Declaration of Independence as "the most damnable lie as the devil ever invented", and the general commanding in the Philippines seized a Spanish translation of the document because it was "incendiary". The American people never had any rational notion of what they might behave by annexing the islands, as is illustrated by the terrible excess of Kipling's poem, "The White Man's Burden". Stuart Creighton Miller does not make the point explicitly, but gives plenty of evidence showing how often and how eagerly American imperialists seized on the phrase about "your own-civilized sullen peoples / Half-devil and half-child". It took an Englishman, that is, to discover the American mission in the Philippines. The conquerors translated his boasts into their own language. If the Filipino was a Malay bandit, a Chinese halfbreed, a god-god, or a nigger in a grass skirt, they were fully entitled to do as they pleased with him, particularly with the business end of a rifle. "The only good Filipino is a dead one. Take no prisoners; lead is cheaper than rice."

Within these limitations Professor Miller has written an excellent study, full of rewarding details, of judgment and thorough scholarship. It will be a standard work for some time to come, even if, to the last paragraph, it is more a study of American opinion than the complete history it is intended to lead to. I regret that I must take aim at the author yet again, this time for his use of the term "American Innocence".

We all know what he (and others) mean: he refers to the state of mind that was so universal before America's many wars in the twentieth century made her a sadder and wiser nation. But is "innocence" an appropriate term for the bloodthirsty, bigoted, racist, arrogant, fanatically prejudiced people depicted with such telling precision in this book? If so, what would be pulled in by the American flag? If it is appropriate for the American flag, why may it not be used of the British and Germans of the same era, who displayed most of the same characteristics?

One example of why this word makes me uneasy: a common meaning of the word "innocence" is "the state of mind of a child who has not yet been corrupted by the knowledge of evil". The word is used of a child who has not yet been corrupted by the knowledge of evil. The word is used of a child who has not yet been corrupted by the knowledge of evil.

The material and the meaningful

Richard Wollheim

NORMAN BRYSON

Word and Image: French painting of the Ancien Régime
281pp. Cambridge University Press.
£27.50.
0 521 23776 9

Any work which tries to break the stranglehold that positivism has come to have over British art-historical studies in recent years is greatly to be welcomed, and Norman Bryson's *Word and Image*, a book full of ideas and erudition, sets out to restore art history to its proper task. The facts of patronage and commission — of fluctuating taste and class ideology, perhaps fascinating in themselves and in certain cases they have an immense importance for our understanding both of individual works of art and of what art is, but they do not actually constitute such understanding. Their accumulation is therefore ancillary to art-history rather than art-history itself. The impression that is hard to resist in that those contemporary art-historians who have put these facts in the forefront of study have done so just because they are facts and therefore (as they see it) repay study as any facts can. Even iconography and connoisseurship or study of the hand — the traditional mode of British art-history — both of which can offer a very special access to the meaning of the work of art, have come to be pursued in the same spirit, as exercises in the secret of fact. The means has been instituted itself as the end. Any serious attempt to reverse the tide of positivism and to rejoin the mainstream of art-history must do two things: it must rediscover a place for theory in art-historical practice, and it must reinterpret this practice as a form of art-criticism. In recent months art-historians have had an excellent opportunity to recognize the intellectual grandeur and opulence of their past as it has been recalled for them in the pages of Michael Podro's *The Critical Histories of Art* (1982).

Word and Image has a clear structure, though much of this clarity is lost in execution. In the Preface and the first chapter the author presents his central thesis in the form of an account of visual art, in which the painting, or "image", is presented as the product of an inherent tension or as a field in which two competing impulses perpetually conflict. These two impulses are the desire for plenitude, or the desire to create something that would be rich in properties and in effect just another object in the world; and the desire for renunciation, or the desire to create something that would be restricted in the properties it had and so could never be anything more than a shadow or ghost of an object in the world. The second desire Norman Bryson connects with — though this is not its only manifestation — the desire to make the painting function semantically, or be the bearer of meaning. As the result of these two desires the painting has two aspects which are called, respectively, the "figure" and the "discursive". In the rest of the book this account of visual art is allegedly put to work, and what Bryson calls an "affirmative history of painting in eighteenth-century France" is generated from it. (Actually the scope of the book is wider than this in that the work of most major French painters of the Ancien Régime, as well as two famous artists of the nineteenth century, are discussed in terms of the relative weight and importance that they assign to figure and discursivity.) If doubts remain whether the actual course of the book corresponds to this schema, it is because it is difficult to say whether the "figure" chapters, which are concerned with interesting observations, Bryson applies the terminology of his central thesis.

The difficulty lies, of course, with the central thesis itself, which is bold and ambiguous to the core. From the start two different interpretations of the figure/discursive distinction — one which gives it a broad scope, the other a narrower scope — suggest themselves, and nothing that Bryson says when he goes on putatively to apply the distinction disambiguates it. The reader's uncertainty is systematically reinforced.

On the broad interpretation the discursive aspect of a painting is the painting in so far as it is sensuous or has materiality. With the distinction understood in this way, the question can then arise, How does a painting gain its discursivity? Does it gain it from its figurality, or elsewhere? and a subsidiary claim of Bryson's is that some works of art, or those we call realist, can give us the illusion of gaining their meaning from one source (their figurality) while really gaining it from another source (code or convention).

On the narrow interpretation the distinction is between different aspects of the painting considered as something meaningful, and the distinction is then a matter of the kind of meaning that we consider — and a painting can have two kinds of meaning. The discursive aspect of a painting is now the painting in so far as its meaning is given by, or the painting is taken to illustrate, a text, and the figurality aspect is the painting in so far as it means all the indefinite number of other things which exceed, or proliferate beyond the content of, the text. And what, we might ask, is the text of a painting, and is every painting endowed with a text? To the last question no direct answer is given, but examples of what it is for a painting to have a text show how generous, or ingenious, Bryson is in assigning texts to paintings. A text can be given, as in medieval art, by an inscription to be found on the surface of the work; Bryson quotes a window in the age of Canterbury Cathedral. (Incidentally, a surprising omission from the bibliography of *Word and Image* is Meyer Schapiro's monograph *Words and Pictures*, 1973, which is on just this subject.) Or it can be given by a prevailing theoretical document: Bryson quotes Le Brun's history paintings as illustrative of his physiognomic lectures. Or it can be given by a psychoanalytic interpretation which the unsatisfactory manifest content of the work solicits: Bryson's examples are the domestic paintings of Greuze and Delacroix's sadistic masterpieces.

However, cutting across these two interpretations of the thesis itself is another problem, which is that of just what Bryson means by "meaning" and how broadly, in the context of painting, it is to be taken. Does a picture mean whatever it represents, or is pictorial meaning something more restricted? For instance, is the meaning of an image only that part of its representational content which is explicitly social, or institutional categories to describe it? This is what Bryson suggests in his discussion of Masaccio's "Tribute Money". He says that the extreme right-hand image in the fresco means "official" and that it also means "profane". He doesn't go on to say that it means "soldier" or that it means "man", though it is an image of a male soldier. Are "soldier" and "man" insufficiently institutional, or is this just plain obvious, and is that the reason why Bryson doesn't say so?

However at this point yet another difficulty arises. Bryson evidently holds that meaning is connected with a code. Does he also hold that representation is connected with a code so that it is in virtue of a code that the image on the farthest right of Masaccio's fresco represents a man? The semantic theory of representation, which would answer yes to this last question, has been advocated in recent years by two reputable thinkers who have little else in common: Roland Barthes and Nelson Goodman. But the view itself is so inherently implausible — a charge to which both those thinkers, it must be said, would be idly indifferent — and there is such a strong intuitive support for the contrary view, according to which a painting represents what it does (say, a man) because this is what we can see in it, even if in many cases our vision must be trained, that it would be wrong to attribute the aesthetic view of representation to someone who did not

expressly advocate it. Bryson does not expressly advocate it; he flirts with it, no more; and one of the very best and most perceptive passages in his book, where he links the element of reverie so often found in Watteau's work with the way in which this work stimulates our untutored projection on to the paint surface, requires that the view be rejected. The issue is relevant here for the following reason: whether Bryson does or does not equate the pictorial meaning of an image with its representational power, or whether pictorial meaning is something narrower, must, given his commitment to meaning as the product of a code, depend upon whether he thinks that representation too depends on a code — that is, on whether he accepts or rejects the semantic account of representation.

And a further and final complicating factor in the understanding of Bryson's thesis is his adoption of the unfortunate Saussurean terminology of "signified" and "signifier". Saussure introduced this terminology so as to mark the difference between that which has meaning (signifier) and what it means (signified). Not only does the terminology seem too simplistic to be applicable wherever meaning occurs — what is the signified "meaning"? — but, as the history of its application shows, it very easily lends itself to ambiguity. For instance, a favourite point of Saussure's is the arbitrariness of the connection between signifier and signified. So, for example, it is arbitrary that the particular sound that I utter when I say "door" should mean a door. But in saying this I shift from talking about a particular sound as something outside a semantic system — for that is what can be said to be arbitrarily associated with a door — to talking about a particular sound as something inside a semantic system — for it is only of that I can say that it means a door. Bryson's way out of this problem is rather surprising, but it would, I suppose, be tolerable if the reader could be absolutely certain that he stuck to it. He equates the signifier with the physical mark in so far as it does not have meaning. So he writes of "the irreducible life of the material signifier — the painterly trace and as an exemplary case of that trace, the semantic brushwork of abstract expressionism".

The very real uncertainties that attach to Bryson's thesis do not, of course, mean that the attempt to formulate the thesis is of no value, and it is a further sign of the prevailing condition of art-history that it is even necessary to make this point. However these uncertainties do have the effect of fragmenting the rest of the book into a series of related but not very precisely co-ordinated observations. In addition to what he has to say about Watteau and projectio, Bryson has interesting discussions of the relation between sexuality and the replacement of perspective space by some amorphous substance, of Boucher's reticence about the virile life in Greuze and of the retreat from dialecticism in David. But what makes all these discussions of particular interest is the way in which in each case Bryson endeavours to understand the peculiarity, the idiosyncrasy, of the artist's work as a peculiarity, as an idiosyncrasy, in that artist's conception of the resources of representation. What is agreeably missing from Bryson's book is mindless reference to the artist's vision. Nevertheless Bryson's project remains on the level of endeavour, and that is because of his failure in this book to articulate with any authority his own conception of what the resources of representation really are.

One interesting consequence of very broad import that Bryson believes to follow from his theoretical concerns is his consideration of the relation of stylistic history. The "alternative history" that Bryson sets himself to write for French eighteenth-century painting is an anti-stylistic history: it expressly avoids categorizing individual works or the work of individual artists by reference to their "general visual look", which is just what, according to Bryson, stylistics is committed to. Painting as sign replaces painting as style as the explicit object of art-historical inquiry. Having in the course of his book shown how stylistic classification can obstruct the real character of certain paintings or certain

painters, Bryson in his conclusion which is entitled "Style or sign", brings together a number of general anti-stylistic considerations or considerations designed to oust style from any primacy of place in art-historical method. There are, he claims, three kinds of art-historical memory, which stylistic history is bound to misrepresent. They occur, one, when there are various styles in circulation which provide the painter with interchangeable ways of doing the same thing (Bryson quotes the French 1780s); two, when style is elective or something that the artist assumes as the result of choice (he is the case with Ingres) when style, so far from offering the artist a mode of expression is an obstacle and something that he must struggle to understand in order to understand himself. Bryson's objections are well-taken so long as stylistic history studies only general style (e.g. rococo, neo-

classicism), and general style is in turn identified (as it probably must be) by reference to the look of the pictorial surface. But these same objections fall when what is studied is individual or personal style, and individual style is identified by reference to the pictorial process in which the surface is only the output. It is, of course, precisely such a generative conception of style that lies behind the best kind of connoisseurship, and it is a pity that this whole tradition is ignored by Bryson.

Anyone genuinely interested in the deeper problems of art will find that the labour he expends in reading *Word and Image* is rewarded. At the same time he is bound to feel that a fairer bargain would have been struck if the author had put as much work into trying to make himself understood as he expects the reader to put into trying to understand him. If he had, *Word and Image* would have been hailed as a remarkable book: it has the makings of one.



Caravaggio's "The Luteplayer", on permanent exhibition in the Hermitage, Leningrad, reproduced from Caravaggio by Howard Hubbard (40pp, with 194 illustrations, 8 in colour, Thames and Hudson, £22.50, 0 500 09161 7), which will be reviewed shortly in the TLS.

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Ursula Le Guin and her story of Arha, the "Eaten One" actually had her name taken from her when she was eight to be replaced by that of her dead mother. She grew up to write totally implausible and furiously bitter stories of female self-sacrifice, though with husbands not mothers in the role of immolator. And how avidly she was read! Hebbeger begins his book by recapturing the picture of the Victorian girl, later Victorian woman, with her nose stuck in a book so firmly that she could not be recaptured, or re-educated. Smell wonder, he remarks, that faced with this institutionalized literary female self-righteousness, men retired to the saloon, thus further confirming their wives' views.

Fantasy is a psychological necessity: so the evidence seems to show. The man beaten to a fight tells his friends how well he did, slowly healing over event with ambition: the professor savaged in a review complains for days in the common room, slowly assembling the things he would have said had constructing a satisfactorily dull picture of his adversary. From this impulse fiction springs. The shocking thing about Hebbeger's book is not that it shows fantasy maintaining a relation with reality, but, conversely, the realistic novel still deeply marked by all the failings of cheapest fantasy. It is a pity that his fire never crosses the

Atlantic, to fall on George Eliot. (What would he have found to say?) It does fall however on Henry James: and with devastating accuracy. James's fiction is obsessed, Hebbeger points out, with hidden secrets — because there was one their author did not know, that of the American music initiation. In *Witch and Ward* James directly parallels to Emma Southworth's *Island of 1864*, about the inadequate male getting the best girl of all. In *Portrait of a Lady* he endorsed the deadly female myth of self-effacement. He never managed a portrait of an American man; he remained a dreadful dramatist and a strikingly poor observer.

So (Chapter 25): "Who Made James the Modern American Master, and Why?" The short answer to "who" is "Philip Rahv, Lionel Trilling and *Partisan Review*"; and the highly unpalatable reason why is that his escapist fantasies, of sensitive loners vindicated, are ours too. It is easy for modern critics to laugh at women's fiction, or sword-and-sorcery, and point to their genre limitations. But what of the ignorant, excluded heroes of Joyce, Proust, T. S. Eliot, James — and, of course, that most academically respectable of fantasists, Mervyn Peake? Are they not genre figures too, whose presentation (for a

certain class of person) is every bit as empirically self-flattering as that of any martyr-mother or brewy barbarian?

Professor Hebbeger, as I have said before, has no time for delicious fantasies, however devoted they following. His impatience with some of the material in Schöbi, Fredericks and Manlove can only be imagined. Still, he does provide unwilling answers to some of the questions others have asked. People flirt with the impossible because the possible, for them, is inadequate; they are bored, alienated, and probably depoliticized to the growth of fascism. Realism, meanwhile, springs from the rejection of fantasy rather than the other way round. Fantasy has as its main goal the creation and reinforcement of belief structures, often (and especially in matters of gender) with ruinous effect. Yet people indulge in it, at one level or another, virtually all the time. The question still remains, whether literary fantasy can ever produce anything worthwhile, and to this Hebbeger's book returns a "No, in thunder." The answer may be "yes" just the same. Anyone making that case out, though, will have to do better than has been managed so far. It is only half the answer to show how internally well-organized complex literary fantasies can be.



An illustration from the Golden Cross Press edition of A. C. Swinburne's *Pasiphaë*, 1950, to be included in a sale of Private Press and English Illustrated Books on May 24 at Sotheby's, Bloomsbury Place, London.

Mood windigo

Mark Abley

JOHN ROBERT COLOMBO (Editor)

Windigo: An Anthology of Fact and Fantasy Fiction

208pp. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Western Producer Prairie Books. 0 88833 097 9

Earle Birney once described the Canadian imagination as "haunted by a lack of ghosts". The phrase evokes the disturbance felt by the English and French populations, who found the new land sadly lacking in tombstones and memories, but it ignores the continent's original inhabitants, for whom the land, air and waters were alive with spiritual forces. Sometimes these spirits were benevolent, such as the giant turtle who, in an Innu myth, carried the world on his back; sometimes they were malevolent. One of the nastiest is Windigo, a cannibal giant whose domain stretched across much of Canada, wherever the forests were occupied by Indians of the Algonquian tribes. He provoked fear, loathing, and a large number of tall stories. In some parts of the country, belief in him may linger; as late as 1960 a Catholic missionary among the Cree in Trout Lake, Alberta, reported, "I do not know of a single Indian who does not immediately tremble with fear at the thought of the Windigo [whose] heart is a block of ice contained within a frozen thoracic cage." He nervously added, "If you notice that someone has been acting strangely, be prompt in incapacitating him before he can do you harm."

Fuller's latest volume of poems *The Beautiful Inventions* also contains images of "monkish slaughter" around the carp pond, but when he comes to playing down the singular details and emphasizes the Brambles and rashes instead. The proof of this particular poem must lie in the eating, an interesting new tendency for epicurean criticism to take. Fuller himself says of this volume: "It will be clear that I am happy to offer variety and accessibility. This is certainly true for as he points out, there are erotic poems, academic poems, Turkish poems, cookery poems, poems in which girls turn into vampires or markish girns for the quality of love, poems about the architecture of wasps . . ."

So fact Fuller has been so careful to include something for everyone that the resulting volume is like an LP medley of old standards in a series of new-fangled arrangements.

Thus the opening poem, called "Retreats", is a bleak picture of an end-of-the-line resort that out-larks Larkin; "Topkapli" is Fuller's variant on the Ozymandias theme; his description of "St Sophia" cannot escape the spell of Yeats's Byzantium; and "Uncertainties" uses enigmatic repetitions and philosophical refrains in a way that recalls *Four Quartets*. Perhaps the best poems in the book are the least ambitious: the recipe "Blighted Pudding" or the poem simply entitled "Ironing", which describes ways of ironing blouses, jeans and shirts, are straightforward celebrations of domestic life. By contrast "The College Ghost" seeks to combine Gothic fantasy, donnish wit and nostalgia in an undemanding narrative form. But the poem is flawed by its over-eagerness to say something significant. Indeed, the main problem with this volume is that Fuller's frequent attempts to deliver "voluntary often result in what the old-style Leavisites used to call a "wilded intensity".

Despite some occasional thematic similarities between them, these two volumes appear to be designed for rather different audiences. The former, *Flying to Nowhere*, is a puzzling, enigmatic and difficult, whereas *The Beautiful Inventions* is unmistakably a popular work. In which, Fuller's desire to entertain has impaired his capacity to stimulate.

may have looked), and was usually killed by other members of his tribe: the American psychologist Morton Teicher has said, "He will frequently plead for his own destruction and interpose no objection to his execution." A Windigo's body would be burnt at once, for fire stone could melt its heart of ice. Teicher also suggests that fear of the Windigo was so strong that it helped to determine the specific forms which mental illness assumed among the Algonquian Indians: belief controls behaviour, even when the behaviour is contrary to social mores. It appears that Windigo stands in respect to behaviour as case does to effect. In short, Windigo were a self-fulfilling nightmare.

This rootedness in Indian experience helps to explain why the Windigo to unfamiliar visitors to Canada literature. Occasionally Americans and Britons have found him a useful source of ghastly colour, but Canadian writers have preferred to leave him strictly alone. Recent novels set in the forests, such as Marian Engel's *Bar* and Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*, have treated the wilderness with a mixture of fear, alienation and mystery — but to lumber the plot with a Windigo, belying-eyed cannibal, scarcely brings the desired effect. Yet he said that the new inhabitants of the old forests require new myths to oppose their old fears. Of the four entries in this book, only one is a dismal poem: it is the work of a serious contemporary writer. Perhaps cannibals lend themselves more easily to high doggerel than they do to light art — or as Golden Nash once remarked, *The Windigo* is *The Windigo* and it is just a frightful goal.

John Robert Colombo has assembled this anthology with wit and imagination: a few of his nineteenth-century sources are wonderfully obscure. But *Windigo* suffers from a central deficiency: it gives little sense of where the beast fits among the other ballads, myths and values of the woodland Indians. How, for instance, do the Ojibwa tales of Windigo relate to their many stories of the bear-walker, a person who uses bear medicine to change into a bear and thereby destroy an enemy? Bear-walkers and Windigos both seem to function partly as bogey men, warning children into goodness. Or to take another example, what is the imaginative relation between the Windigo and the sasquatch (Caucasian yeti)? Another: wood-stalking, a fear whose existence is still believed in by many, whites and Indians alike? The fright at the heart of Windigo is the fear of the Indian, the fear of the Indian's beauty. . . . He surveys the diversity of nature and finds it good" — Chief Harold Cardinal's words are inadequate. But neither were the Indians' traditional perception of nature as relentlessly grim and hostile struck as most of the pages in this book's anthology may indicate.

Indeed the six traditional tales recorded on an Ojibwa tape between 1915 and 1924 are perhaps for their humour and, perhaps, Windigos may be terrifying, but they're no match for human cunning and cunning. It's a far cry from the monster conjured by Algernon Blackwood to the cheerful words of one Lotia Marsden: "The Windigo was very glad that the Windigo was killed, for she was always afraid of him. She lived there with him long time. The end of the story was that the Windigo was killed."

FICTION

The end of the highly organized zoo

Pearl K. Bell

GORE VIDAL

Duluth
205pp. Heinemann. £7.95.
434 83076 3

Writing about Gore Vidal is a hazardous occupation. He is a Waag in both senses of the word: a patrician who dislikes "ethics", and a writer who slings when he is attacked, (To these eager to point out that Vidal is not Anglo-Saxon because his paternal great-grandfather came from Austria: half can do as well as the whole, and Waspiude is mere a state of mind and a question of upbringing than a matter of ancestral purity.) A master of the pre-emptive strike, he slings even when he is not attacked. In his smoothly burnished essays, awash in wit and acid, he has assaulted everything from Christianity to the French *nouveau roman*, and has aimed some of his most arduous contempt at the Serious Novel (his capitals) that deals with the Human Condition, the family, love, compassion, and other sentimental middle-class nonsense. He has been no less scathing about university critics ("the hacks of Academe"), Jewish intellectuals ("fag-baiters"), and the New York Times ("a sort of rabbinical upholding Mosaic values"). Vidal's heaviest ammunition, however, has been fired, in novels, essays, and interviews, at the irredeemable corruption and vulgarity of the United States, past and present, which he has variously described as "a highly organized zoo" and an empire drifting towards fascism.

Such pervasive misanthropy has its paradoxical reward: it gets a lot of attention. Though Vidal believes that Americans can barely read by now, so completely have they become the slaves of television, this has not kept him from writing at the course of a career prolific rate. In the contemporary, as Neuman Maiter and William Styron from Duluth to a soap opera called "Duluth" to the best-selling "Tales of Derring-do in Regency Hyatt England" written by one Rosemary Klein Kantor, whose nose is a credit to her "ancient rabbinical" ancestors. The mortar that is meant to hold these bricks of burlesque together is Vidal's running parody of the currently modish tropes of academic criticism: "We call this *opéra post-structuralism*," the explainer explains. "The many studies that are currently being made of the

simultaneously effect vividly demonstrates . . . that although the English language may decline and dwindle, English studies are more than ever complex and rewarding." In the end, after much hilarity about Chicano genitalia and other lurid diversions, a mysterious spaceship that has been squatting on the outskirts of Duluth (er "Duluth") disgorges its alien creatures — millions of bugs that devour everything in their path: Duluth, the Dallas-inspired soap opera, the nattering post-structuralists "so admired by the French and hoola-hoola Yale", and Vidal's novel. Having once destroyed the world with magic, in *Kalki*, Vidal now has a more gruesome apocalypse to offer. It doesn't work.

Since every joke in *Duluth* lays an egg, it is tempting to think it was written by an imposter. How could such clumsily laboured sniggering be the product of Gore Vidal, the mandarin essayist, unquestionably one of the wittiest and most intelligent writers of our times? Yet the sour obsessions are all too familiar, as is the carelessly generalized contempt for the United States, that nation of Yahoos. What is new in *Duluth* — and the only genuinely shocking thing about the book — is the unalleviated banality of its satire.

Gore Vidal's wholesale condemnation of anything that smacks of middle-class pro-American opinion and values is more trite and wearying — and at times more wrong-headed — than he seems to realize, or care. In a recent volume called *Views from a Window: Conversations with Gore Vidal* (a collection of interviews edited by Gore Vidal; like Norman Mailer, he regards his innumerable interviews as part of his collected works), the relentless, repetitious complaints about American (and particularly Jewish) bigotry towards homosexuality seem more appropriate to pre-war America than they do to the present, but Vidal cannot bring himself to admit that anything has changed. He can sound oddly outdated, as though he were still living in the United States of Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* and *Babbalanja*, and attacking the complacent materialism and cultural-social provincialism of the 1920s.

Even more astonishing is his wilful indifference to the facts when, for example, he declares, some years after the *New York Times* was hailed last court for publishing the Pentagon Papers, that "You may not criticize the American imperium and expect the *Times* to support you; particularly now

when the Pentagon stands between gallant little Israel and the Arab hordes." And when Vidal claimed not long ago, in that otherwise brilliant appreciation of Peacock's novels, that "Americans will never accept any literature that does not plainly support the prejudices and aspirations of a powerful and bigoted middle class", it became obvious that no amount of evidence to the contrary — the enormous success of Doctorow's *Ragtime*, or of any book by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. — could shake him free of his prejudices. Of course a change of mind can be unsettling. How can he go on reviling the American middle class if it is no longer the uniformly bigoted enemy he loves to hate?

Gore Vidal has from time to time said that he is for social justice (not to be confused, he warns, with smarmy compassion) and that he writes, in part, to change society. In some of his political essays he has spelled out the measures, mostly visionary, that must be taken to achieve these ends. Presumably for the same reason, he has twice run for public office. But it is difficult to take these high-minded aspirations seriously when they are so often accompanied by the kind of Schopenhauerian cynicism, for

instance, he ended his "State of the Union" essay in 1975: "True revolutions can only take place when things fall apart in the wake of some catastrophe. A lost war, a collapsed economy. We seem headed for the second. If so, then let us pray that that somber, all-consuming Bastille known as the consumer society will fall, as the first American revolution begins. It is long overdue."

Characteristically, he does not address himself to the question of putting society together again after the fall: a boring anticlimax, best forgotten.

The displaced aristocrat who is out of step with his squelched democratized times can be a poignant figure, even an instructive voice. It hardly needs to be said that Gore Vidal is never poignant. When he writes about fashionable literary pretentiousness he can indeed be instructive. But when he is consumed with indiscriminate loathing far on age that does not sufficiently appreciate his novels, for a political writer he rejects out of hand as incurably corrupt and not worth saving, for a culture that he finds insufferably dull and second-rate, he is the wisp that fails to sting.

Lionized

Adam Mars-Jones

RACHEL INGALLS

Binshead's Safari
221pp. Faber. £7.95.
0 571 13016 X

Millie Binshead, the central character of Rachel Ingalls's new novel, has by the beginning of the book reached a state of self-marital breakdown. Her husband Stan, an anthropologist whose sensitivity decreases exponentially the nearer he comes to dealing with his own tribe, spends most of his time with considerable success — trying to make her feel worthless.

They are a couple who know better than to discuss the things that have gone wrong between them, even in jest; Millie remembers only too well the time their friend Sally Murchison said "lightly" to her husband, "What would you do without me?", and he answered, "Rejoice".

So when Stan is planning a trip to Africa, to investigate rumours of a new lion-cult, Millie, who has no sentimental attachments, she just says she wants a holiday. A timely legacy (Great Aunt Edna's suddenly fashionable collection of whatnots) will cover her expenses.

On previous form Millie should have been as cowed and subservient in London, where they prepared for their safari, as she had always been in America; but in fact she started to make a life for herself. She had her hair cut, bought new clothes, and went to the ballet, while Stan, under pretext of research, engaged in some half-hearted adultery.

Still less in Africa should Millie have been able to cope; but in fact Stan was only tolerated by the various groups they encountered, while Millie seemed to command respect and admiration. Over and above these suddenly acquired social skills, she showed real promise, when on safari, as a naive artist, doing paintings of zebra and panthers which the westerners found charming and the natives perceived as magic.

She has already made a conquest before they leave the city for the wilds; she has met the glances, through a shop-window into which she was absent-mindedly gazing, of an infinitely charismatic and attractive man. He courts her, seduces her, and manages to send messages to her when she is up-country; she finds she is pregnant (something she has never achieved with Stan), and decides quite calmly to divorce her husband and remarry.

Her lover, Harry "Simba" Lewis, turns out to be a legendary figure in the area; his nickname "lion" was given to him when he survived the inflation of the Masai, which involves single combat with an enraged lion.

Without its supernatural element, *Binshead's Safari* would look uncomfortably like a routine novel of marital unease and adjustment, with some oddly old-fashioned assumptions; Millie, after all, gets the strength she needs to reject Stan from another man, and there is cliché enough in the plot-line of the oppressed wife miraculously transformed by romance.

Stan's psychology is likewise once too convincing; he examines his past as the novel proceeds, and comes to realize that he has always felt inferior to his brother, who was killed in the Korean War and is therefore exempt from failure. He has always taken his resentment out on Millie.

But even with its trappings of premonition and eeriness, *Binshead's Safari* fails to combine satisfactorily its genres. It has its share of captivating moments — at one point Stan fails to notice that the natives, in their songs about the Lion's Bride, are referring to his once-dowdy spouse — but as a whole it fails to transcend its elements of adventure-story and of novelette.

A new edition of Stephen Crane's classic novel *The Red Badge of Courage*, edited by Henry Binder to present "as fully as possible, the novel as it existed in Crane's handwritten manuscript", has recently been published (175pp. W. W. Norton. £10.95. 0 393 01345 6). The novel first appeared as a newspaper serial in December 1895, then as a book in October the following year, published by D. Appleton and Co.; the editor writes in his Introduction that "the text . . . printed here is not simply an improvement on what Appleton published, but comes close to being a different novel. Although the text Appleton issued in 1895 retained enough of the original power to become a surprising success, it was a version of the original so seriously reduced that it has puzzled students, professional critics, and readers with a more than casual knowledge of the story . . . the significance of details and their relative importance was often lost, and the narrative was confused and blurred . . ." The edition also contains an essay, "The Red Badge of Courage Nobody Knows", a statement of editorial policy, textual notes and a list of editorial emendations.

Territorial advances

J. K. L. Walker

KATH WATERHOUSE

In the Mood
250pp. Michael Joseph. £7.95.
0 7181 2224 0

In the Mood is Kath Waterhouse's eighth novel and, as revealed in a recent television interview, formed something like a third of a total work output for the year in which it was written. "Less than a thousand words a day," said his interlocutor, "shows no signs of having had to take its place in the queue with the plays, television scripts, articles and weekly column which give Waterhouse a more broadly based reputation."

Forseeing the splendours and miseries of contemporary London which made *Maggie Muggins*, his last novel, such a rich if somewhat judged night out, Waterhouse has released a long and backwards in time for his new comedy. In the Mood is set in the period immediately prior to the Festival of Britain of 1951, that time of nationalized "jollification", and is concerned with the amorous escapades of three young Yorkshire clerks, newly extruded from Gt. Gt. Gt. College of Commerce. From the vantage point of the present day, the narrator, Raymond, Walmouth, looks back

thirty years in the opening pages of the novel on that different country to which "youth was our visa . . .". Although we were only visitors, yet it had no other inhabitants while we were there, or none that we recognised." Ray, and the other members of the triumvirate, Douglas Beckett and Terry Liveridge, set out on their careers in, respectively a travel agency, a bank and a building society, guided less by ambition than by lust. The "single smiling glance" that shapes their lives.

The ever-changing chorus line leads the three of them a pretty dance through the urban glades of the Youth Club Social, the Kismet Café, the Clock Ballroom, and above all the back rows of the cinemas — the Gaumont Coliseum, the Gaiety, the Picture Palace. Here (or, if dry, in the less public areas of the public park) they inch forward on their adventurous journeys into the unknown terrain of girls' bodies, grazing chiblis on petticoat edging, fondling moles rather than nipples, and constantly off course by ill-drawn maps telling them that "any chick wearing a dress that buttoned all the way down that front was so blatantly advertising her desires that she might just as well carry it folded over her arm". As they move to exchange or borrow favourite clothes or belongings, trading in gunmetal cigarette case for mock-crocodile wallet, boastful aspirations

quickly swallow up the pathetic reality. A foray into church, thought to be second only to a woman's prison as a venue for frustrated females, nets Douglas a girl, and with the ingenuity that is later to make him the youngest chief executive of his building society, he sets out to organize an old people's outing to London for the Festival of Britain as a cover for a hoped-for sexual excursion. The novel ends as the coach speeds down the Great North Road carrying with it the "portable scent of promise."

Waterhouse's *In the Mood* is a world with great skill. Although the story is simple, it commands acceptance by the densely plotted shifts of allegiance — the narrator alone has gone through five girls by the end of the novel — and by the careful and authentic build-up of detail that brings time and place vividly to life. Ours is a thirty years ago emerges as a more agreeable place than London today, and no doubt Waterhouse will be reproached for romanticizing the recent past. In the Mood, however, she shows no signs of having had to take its place in the queue with the plays, television scripts, articles and weekly column which give Waterhouse a more broadly based reputation.

Forseeing the splendours and miseries of contemporary London which made *Maggie Muggins*, his last novel, such a rich if somewhat judged night out, Waterhouse has released a long and backwards in time for his new comedy. In the Mood is set in the period immediately prior to the Festival of Britain of 1951, that time of nationalized "jollification", and is concerned with the amorous escapades of three young Yorkshire clerks, newly extruded from Gt. Gt. Gt. College of Commerce. From the vantage point of the present day, the narrator, Raymond, Walmouth, looks back

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The Co-operative Women's Guild has since expanded to include a wide range of social and educational activities, and it has become one of the most important organizations of its kind in the world. The Guild's work has since expanded to include a wide range of social and educational activities, and it has become one of the most important organizations of its kind in the world. The Guild's work has since expanded to include a wide range of social and educational activities, and it has become one of the most important organizations of its kind in the world.

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Presumptions of the self

Roger Scruton

MICHAEL J. SANDEL

Liberalism and the Limits of Justice
191pp. Cambridge University Press.
£17.50 (paperback, £5.95).
0 521 24501 X

"Liberalism" denotes a variety of theories and conceptions, not all compatible with one another, and not all of equal merit. It is a virtue of Michael J. Sandel's book that it identifies a core idea in liberalism — an idea that will explain the variety, appeal and system of liberal conceptions of society. It is a further virtue that he finds this core idea, not in a conception of liberty, but in a metaphysical picture of the self, thus locating the true source both of the strengths and of the deficiencies in liberal thinking. It is, I believe, an important fact that Sandel chooses to study, not Kant, who perceived more clearly than any other philosopher the necessary dependence of liberal ideas on the metaphysics of the first person, but Kant's verbose disciple, John Rawls, whose *A Theory of Justice* determines the title, the emphasis and the argument of Sandel's monograph.

I say that this is a fault for two reasons. First, because Sandel's book will be taken to be yet another commentary on the world's most overrated work of moral philosophy, and will therefore not receive the attention that it deserves. Secondly, because Rawls complicates Kant's argument, without clarifying or deepening it, so that Sandel, who remorselessly follows him into the coulisses and blind alleys of *A Theory of Justice*, burdens his exposition with redundancy. Unlike Rawls, Sandel has a direct, elegant style, and a charming disposition to lay his cards on the table. It is clear from the opening pages that he has gone straight to the basis of Rawls's theory, that he has identified the idea which constitutes the greatest attraction, and the greatest weakness, in what Rawls (in recent writings) has called "Kantian constructivism", and that he has so undermined the foundations of Rawls's edifice, that his subsequent attempts to push it over at the top, while propping it up from the bottom are painful and exasperating. Almost

every page of Sandel's incisive prose is inset with a gleaming slab of Rawls, and while this has the salutary effect of reinforcing one's awareness that the badness of Rawls's style is of a piece with the evasiveness of his reasoning — his capacity constantly to postpone what he really wants to say — it does nothing to keep one's attention on Sandel's argument. Had Sandel discussed, not Rawls, but Kant; had he considered, not only justice, but practical reasoning generally; had he followed Kant into those metaphysical regions where the idea of radical freedom appears, not only impossible, but also necessary — had he done that, then he might have saved himself and his reader many headaches, while also preparing the ground for the positive work of reconstruction which his argument conspicuously requires.

Despite all that, I welcome Sandel's book for its central insight. He argues that the liberal emphasis on justice — according to which human rights are the central aim of social order — depends upon a systematic and contentious theory of human nature, and that the inability of liberalism to order the human condition is a consequence of this theory. Liberalism esteems choice above everything, and regards justice — the securing of rights — as the procedure whereby each person's freedom is reconciled with the freedom of his neighbour. The concepts of freedom and justice thereby become radically intertwined: true human freedom consists in the ability to assert one's rights, while true human rights are those necessitated by freedom. The "well-ordered" society (to borrow Rawls's language) must attend first to justice, since this describes the condition in which the free being can flourish according to his nature. A liberal theory of justice, according to Rawls, must free the idea of right from any particular conception of the human good, so as to allow each individual to develop in the way that best suits his nature and circumstances. Our rights are not to be circumscribed by meddlesome moralists convinced that their alone is the legitimate conception of value. Good government ought to be compatible with a plurality of human purposes. No particular scheme of values, no particular historical community, no particular custom, circumstance or prejudice, can be incorporated into the abstract statement of our basic rights, which reflects only the fundamental

requirement, that justice is the guarantee of freedom, and respect for freedom the origin of law.

We may be suspicious of the attempt to separate "rights" so radically from "values", and to define the purposes of government universally and abstractly, without reference to the contingencies of human history. But Sandel is not interested in such — for him, superficial — suspicions. He is concerned to discover what the liberal procedure implies about the human agent. Behind the abstract ideas of freedom and justice, he argues, lies an equally abstract idea of the individual person. It is assumed that "the self is prior to the ends which are affirmed by it" (to use another phrase of Rawls's). Our values and aims do not constitute our nature, but are "possessions", variable circumstances which, because they make for the variety and multiplicity of the human condition, cannot be considered by any theory of justice that is to be universally applied. Sandel shows in detail that no liberal theory can avoid a similar conclusion. A theory which aims at a single universal standard of justice must achieve that standard by abstraction — by winnowing away the features which distinguish agents one from another, so as to approach the hypothetical position in which agents have no other basis for their choice than the fact of choice itself. (This procedure, whereby everything that matters to a person is "discounted", is what Rawls means by "fairness".) Such a theory must assume that the chooser himself remains, even when his distinguishing attributes have been pared away. The abstracted chooser who occupies Rawls's "original position" is still a self, who retains whatever is necessary freely to enter a "social contract" with similar "disprivileged" beings. The least that should be said in response to such an idea is that the onus is on the liberal to show that this "abstract subject" really does have the capacity for rational choice, and that the process whereby his aims and values have been pared away has not also robbed him of himself.

Sandel goes further, and argues for the incoherence of the idea. To those familiar with Kantian ethics, and with Kant's own brilliant anticipation of the difficulties which his philosophy must encounter, Sandel's arguments will have a familiar ring. Like Kant, Sandel sees that to derive duties from the idea

of rational choice alone is to abstract from the "empirical conditions" of the agent. It is therefore to universalize: we respect reason in ourselves only by respecting reason in others. Like Kant too, Sandel sees that it is difficult, once we have embarked on this process of abstraction, to stop short of an idea of the moral subject as "transcendental self", a noumenal ghost who exists always at the unknowable perimeter of his situation. The subject becomes a perspective on the world of action, and ceases to be an item within it. Like Kant, Sandel sees the difficulty in that the transcendental subject has no *principium individuationis*: the very abstraction which created him, also deprived him of his identity as a self. This objection, which imitates one offered by Kant to Leibniz, is used with devastating effect by Sandel against Rawls's original position.

Sandel's major difference from Kant lies in his rejection of the liberal idea of the subject. Kant regarded the idea of a transcendental self not as incoherent, but as incomprehensible. It lies at the limit of human understanding, which can never describe the transcendental perspective, but only point to it as a "necessary idea" of reason. Sandel is less sympathetic to the transcendental subject, largely because he does not review the arguments which led Kant to postulate its existence. In particular, he ignores the metaphysical worries about the self which troubled Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The notion of the autonomous, rights-bearing person issues not merely from the abstractions necessary to a theory of justice, but also from plausible considerations about first-person knowledge, and its relation to agency. Kant believed that the "necessary idea" could not be abandoned, precisely because it is the premise of practical reasoning. And he may, for all Sandel says, be right. It would not be a deficiency in liberalism that it should be founded on the same illusion as is human agency.

Sandel's book contains many powerful arguments. He gives an interesting analysis of contract, distinguishing the freedom of a contract from its fairness, and he successfully demolishes Rawls's claim that the liberal conception of justice is contractual. Sandel argues that, if the Kantian idea of the self is tenable at all, then it is not the agreement among

rational agents which creates their obligations, but the reasoning which precedes agreement, and which makes agreement superfluous. In other words, if Rawls is right, so is Kant; and if Kant is right, Rawls's apparatus is unnecessary.

Sandel's fundamental positive claim — that the self is not prior to but the product of community — is, I believe, correct. However, Sandel does not spell out the reasons for it, nor does he pay any attention to the arguments of its most imaginative exponent, Hegel. This is a pity, since Hegel tried to reconcile the ideas of Kant's ethics with the view that the "self" is an artefact, the product of political existence. True "reflective equilibrium" exists between the pieties which produce the idea of self, and the liberal universalism which is produced by it. The attempt to reconcile a conservative idea of political order with a liberal conception of the self makes Hegel particularly important, I believe, for modern political thinking. Sandel, who shows why Hegel's enterprise is so important, stops short of examining it.

More fundamentally, there is, I believe, a major lacuna in Sandel's argument. He writes constantly of the liberal tendency to the self as "separate from" its values and aims, which thereby become its "properties". He argues that I am, to the contrary, "constituted" by, or "identified with" these things. But this is no real argument. To be "identified with" a moral outlook is not to be "identical with" it. There are legitimate questions here; but a full discussion ought to be more careful than Sandel's to recognize that the distinction between individual and property, essence and accident, self and possession, are not one distinction but three, and to acknowledge that last identify myself with my values and my community, without being constituted by either.

Nevertheless, Sandel successfully establishes his negative conclusion, which is (in his own elegant words) "by putting the self beyond the reach of politics, [liberalism] makes the agency an article of faith rather than an object of continuing attention and concern, a premise of its own making, which it takes for granted and which it misses the pathos of politics and its most inspiring possibilities." I hope that, in some future volume, Sandel will tell us what those possibilities are.

Left murders right

Paul Preston

CARLOS FERNANDEZ

Paracuellos del Jarama: ¿Carrillo culpable?
236pp. Barcelona: Argos Vergara.
\$4 117\$ 530 7

IAN GIBSON

Paracuellos: Cómo fue
281pp. Barcelona: Argos Vergara.
\$4 117\$ 530 3

For forty years, defenders of the Franco regime justified its brutally repressive policies as the only barrier against the return of blood-crazed Reds. Accordingly, one of the most astonishing features of Spain's transition from dictatorship to democracy has been the tacit truce between Right and Left on the issue of Civil War atrocities. On the left, there had for many years been talk of revenge for the war-time massacres and post-war purges. Wisely, the leaders of both the Socialist and Communist parties clamped down on this sort of talk instead for policies of reconciliation which involved considerable restraint. In addition to Cuernavaca or the massacres of Badajoz and Málaga, there were the grey years after the war when Republicans were second-class citizens, at best unable to get work or to travel, at worst subject to prison, torture and death.

The Right too had its smouldering hatreds but also ample time and opportunity to wreak its vengeance. During, and for many years after, the Civil War, a deluge of publications whipped up indignation at the so-called barbarie roja, the crimes real and alleged of the Red barbarians. These consisted of the killings of priests and nuns and capitalists by uncontrolled elements in the early days of the war, or parallel police units operating against the Francoist fifth column, and

above all, of the mass execution of imprisoned Nationalist sympathizers during the siege of Madrid in November 1936. Atrocities literature for many years justified the worst excesses of the Francoist repression.

With the passing of time and especially after the great social changes of the 1960s, the intensity of Civil War resentments began to fade, except in the strongholds of authoritarian nostalgia: the military academies and the ultra-Rightist press. Thus, when the post-Franco future came on to the political agenda and the Left demonstrated its readiness to remain silent about its wounds, the civilized Right matched its forbearance. This made good political sense. The two great political successes of the constitutional monarchy have been Adolfo Suárez and Felipe González, young men free of any Civil War association. Some commentators would attribute the electoral demise of the Communist Party to the fact that its leader, Santiago Carrillo, was a prominent figure during the war.

As the primordial object of Francoist hatred, the Communists probably suffered more than any other group from the dictatorship. Yet they were the originators of the notion of national reconciliation and the smoothness of the transition process owed more than a little to their self-control. That was to earn them their legalization on April 9, 1977, and, inadvertently, the renewal of Civil War atrocity accusations. Seven months earlier, the Minister of Defence, General Díaz de Mendivil, had resigned in protest at the legalization of the trade unions because he held them responsible for "outrages committed in the red zone". Now in April, the Minister for the Navy, Admiral Pita de Veiga, resigned on similar grounds. This was hardly surprising since the Communist menace was the central plank of Francoist ideology and especially of the anti-democratic obsessions in which the armed forces were trained.

Wrong in the right way

Anne Whitmarsh

MICHEL-ANTOINE BURNIER

Le Testament de Sartre
203pp. Paris: Orban. 58 fr.
20855 65297 2

Three years after Sartre's death *Le Testament de Sartre* appears to be the fashion. Each year the anniversary of his death inevitably gives rise to reassessments of the man or his works. A recurrent theme is the search for Sartre's successor: who has taken his place? No clear answer emerges, unless it is that there are no longer any outstanding intellectual leaders. The younger generation in France seems to be profoundly uninterested in Sartre's literary works and intellectually and politically untouched by his ideas. Among them Sartre is forgotten. The debate is carried on only among those who are old enough for him to have been an essential part of their own experience.

We have seen in the past two years a series of books whose authors lay claim to ownership of some part of the true Sartre, and whose concern is to reveal his personal experience of the man or his ideas. Some of these are anecdotal, some are confessional and are written in self-justification, others are more in the nature of a *résumé* de compte.

Michel-Antoine Burnier is concerned to destroy the myth of Sartre as a competent, courageous and shrewd political guide. To do this he has written, in the first person, a fake political testament for Sartre, which he might call a parody were it not for the composed of authentic quotations. Although he is now one of the editors of *L'Actual*, Burnier was trained as a political scientist and his book would probably have seemed more persuasive and reliable if it had been written as a serious political study. The references fully documented, more than in this more journalistic form. It would on the other hand have

had much less impact, because even for those who are aware of all the contradictions of Sartre's attitude in history, this juxtaposition of one example after another of misjudgment, gullibility, cynicism and prevarication is profoundly disturbing.

We are invited to experience Sartre's lack of reaction to the Nazi threat in the 1930s, his poor Resistance record, and his compensatory involvement in politics after the war. In his determination not to be anti-communist and not to leave the working classes without hope he was always reluctant to criticize the USSR (on the grounds that "nous manquons d'informations", a lack which never deterred him from attacking Western regimes) and was finally accepted by the PCF as a reliable fellow-traveller just as the truth broke about the atrocities of Stalinist Russia. He quarrelled with his closest friends one after another as they lost their illusions. Disillusioned himself by the crushing of the 1956 Hungarian uprising, his rejection of the USSR was not complete until the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. In the meantime other revolutionary regimes — China, Cuba — took its place until they, too, failed to live up to his initial hopes. He then turned to the Maoist groups which proliferated in the France of the 1970s, which gave him a renewed sense of involvement after so long on the fringes of political activity. Their appeal to violence fascinated him. In 1973 he declared: "En régime révolutionnaire, doit se débarrasser d'un certain nombre d'individus qui le menacent, at je ne vois pas d'autres moyen que la mort". Even though his essential humanity got the better of him later.

Most of this itinerary is well documented already, but some of the information is new. Two episodes stand out. One is Sartre's complete misreading of the new mood among intellectuals in Prague in 1963, where he gave a universally acclaimed and set speech in praise of the Soviet system when they expected moral support from this apostle of

freedom. The other is his persistent refusal to appear on behalf of Jean-Paul Sartre's associates, at their trial in 1960, after he had privately encouraged their network in the illegal transfer of funds for the FLN in Algeria, and the amazing forgery of the famous letter of support.

It must be said that although all that is presented as fact here is true, the image Burnier builds up is in some ways unjust, taking no account of the agonizing that often went on before Sartre took decisions, or of his idealism. Burnier reduces him to a cynical opportunist. He does nevertheless give Sartre credit for the courage of his stand against colonialism, his refusal to take sides in the Arab-Israeli conflict and above all his public support for the Vietnamese boat people, in spite of their being refugees from a revolutionary communist state.

Le Testament de Sartre is deliberately provocative and was intended to stimulate a debate on Sartre and politics. It has been received with almost comical silence from the "Sartrean" media. Certain other writers on the left have come to Sartre's defence, but they do not dispute the charges. They dismiss them by questioning the moral value of attacking Sartre for his political mistakes, which were shared by almost all the intellectual left, and which no one ought to take seriously because the political pronouncements of a writer are unimportant. But Sartre was widely seen as a political figure, so it is right that misapprehensions about his views and actions should be corrected.

The present criticisms of Sartre do not in fact diminish his stature as the intellectual conscience of his time. He was often wrong in his judgments (he admitted this, but always claimed that at the time he was "right to be wrong"), he would frequently choose the wrong causes and the wrong allies, but he asked the right questions. If his answers were sometimes mistaken, the questions themselves forced others to think, to define their own attitudes in relation to his.

quoted as saying "I am a socialist and I believe that for the good of the Spanish nation it is necessary to know the truth." In his preface, he says that "As a man, as a hispanist and as a socialist, I have always been concerned about what happened to the political prisoners in Madrid during the early months of a civil war."

St Fernández has no such lofty idealism. He makes no bones of the fact that he is out to stick the blame on Carrillo. In consequence, his book is more of a diatribe than an investigation and, as such, would not have been out of place in 1939. There is little in the way of research. Fernández's main sources are well-known secondary works, the majority of which barely mention "Paracuellos" in passing. Unlike Gibson, he failed to interview Carrillo but has no qualms about reprinting the most lurid accusations against him from the fascist newspaper, *El Alcázar*. Padding rather than scholarship is the hallmark of the book, and it is difficult to follow the rambling logic whereby the author comes to the conclusion that the deaths in Madrid at this time were between 5,300 and 8,000. The only section of the book which comes alive is a farcical farce from the 12,000 still claimed by the ultra-Right and a more reasoned appropriation of blame than the normal hysterical pointing of the finger at Carrillo; but it adds little to what was concluded by Thomas. The greatest deficiency of *Paracuellos: cómo fue* is, however, that the gruesome facts of the massacre are not more firmly placed in their context. With Madrid being hotly bombed and besieged, the activities of the fifth column and the nearness of the Nationalists caused popular panic and serious military repatriation. This is not to justify the killings, but the lack of a properly delineated context, which marred Mr Gibson's previous book on the assassination of Calvo Sotelo, lends itself to precisely that sensationalism which he has so anxiously disclaimed. The author of the mastery *The Death of Lorca* can surely do better than this.

propaganda works. Nor is he above the annoying Spanish habit of inflating the value of sources by claiming to be the first to use them. Gibson rightly congratulates himself on his use of the archives of the *Causa General*, the Francoists' war-crimes investigation, but then makes an almost equal fuss about his use of the memoirs of the German Felix Schlayer, who was the Norwegian Chargé d'affaires, *Diplomat in roten Madrid*. Since Schlayer worked hard to discover the fate of prisoners, his memoirs are clearly an important source but it is going too far to say that they have never been quoted before in Spain. Joaquín Arrarás cited them in 1943 in his official *Historia de la cruzada*, as did Hugh Thomas. Herbert Southworth and Burnett Bolloten in their standard works, long since available in Spain in translation.

Despite these flaws, Gibson has produced the sort of vividly written inquiry that has become his hallmark. His conclusions, lucidly reached, are that 2,000 prisoners were killed and that responsibility lay with the Communists; if not with Carrillo personally, then with the Russian advisers present at the time. This is a far cry from the 12,000 still claimed by the ultra-Right and a more reasoned appropriation of blame than the normal hysterical pointing of the finger at Carrillo; but it adds little to what was concluded by Thomas. The greatest deficiency of *Paracuellos: cómo fue* is, however, that the gruesome facts of the massacre are not more firmly placed in their context. With Madrid being hotly bombed and besieged, the activities of the fifth column and the nearness of the Nationalists caused popular panic and serious military repatriation. This is not to justify the killings, but the lack of a properly delineated context, which marred Mr Gibson's previous book on the assassination of Calvo Sotelo, lends itself to precisely that sensationalism which he has so anxiously disclaimed. The author of the mastery *The Death of Lorca* can surely do better than this.

Abstractions all around

Kenneth Minogue

SIMON CLARKE

Marx, Marginalism and Modern Sociology From Adam Smith to Max Weber
250pp. Macmillan. £15 (paperback, £5.95).
0 333 29252 9

In Kuhnian terms, *Marx, Marginalism and Modern Sociology* is an exercise within the Marxian paradigm of social theory. It doesn't therefore quite fit into the usual academic categories. It isn't quite intellectual history, though it tells the story of argument in economics from Smith to the Marginalists. It isn't quite social theory, because it doesn't argue too much is taken for granted. What it does is to connect thoughts with social structure. It is, by the standards of its genre, well written and fair-minded. What issues does it raise?

Adam Smith (the story runs) brought a greater reality to the justification of capitalism by developing both class theory and the materialist conception of history. But because of ideological limitations, he could not quite grasp that the relations between classes were social, nor that conflict was fundamental to capitalist society. His successors in the development of political economy, no longer needing to defeat feudalism, came to be embarrassed by the implications about the nature of the profit which could be drawn from the labour theory of value. Marginalism developed in response to these

embarrassments, not as a scientific revolution (that was already in the process of development by Marx) but as an ideological regrouping of ideas in response to both social and intellectual developments in the nineteenth century. Economics, which had, in its limited way, aimed to provide a full social theory, retreated into the abstract technicalities of rational choice theory.

"In eliminating the classical theory of class," Simon Clarke tells us, "marginalism finally completed the naturalisation of capitalist society that classical political economy had begun." This odd term "naturalisation" has nothing to do with passports; it means, rather, a process in which an abstract model of rational choosing is placed off as if it were just natural human behaviour, and is attributed to neo-classical economists. But if human beings are naturally rational, how are we to account for the irrationalities of the existing behaviour of Europeans, which Mr Clarke takes to be the realities of capitalist life? Answering this question was the challenge. In response to which modern sociology was born. Thus for ideological reasons having to do with the defending of capitalism, economics and sociology have become locked in a "condition" of intellectual abstraction, while the conceptual revolution initiated by Marx, which provided a unified theory of society, has, to the discredit of academic social scientists, not of Marx, been left undeveloped.

Here then is a critical account of how this well-known capitalist play of "divide and confuse" was implemented

in the social sciences. And the engine of criticism is the idea of abstraction which advances down the decades like a steamroller, flattening everything in its path. Smith, Marx, Jevons, even Talcott Parsons, are all assimilated to the apologetics of modern life. Smith, for example, gets tangled up with something called "capitalism" of which he had, of course, never heard, and to whose problems therefore he could at best address himself obliquely. But he is conscripted into an army whose purpose it is to develop a theory of social order, and then promptly court-martialed for providing inadequate answers to questions he never asked.

The absence of a coherent theory of value means that Smith's entire social theory is ultimately (and) based on an anecdote and assertion. Over the treatment of people like Hegel; it is better to draw a veil. So far as intellectual history is concerned, this is a stroll through the warworks.

It does, however, raise a fascinating question about the place of abstraction in social theory. For Marx, Clarke tells us, "society could not be explained abstractly, on the basis of the confrontation of abstract individuals and an abstract nature." This conventional, though rather baffling, remark must be judged, I suppose, according to what is meant by the activity called "explaining society". Different questions require different types of abstraction. The problem becomes more complicated when the "error" Clarke believes Marx to have diagnosed is juxtaposed against the predominantly sounder view that "Society" does not develop only in particular historical circumstances. It is clear that every time Marx used the word

"historical", he imagined he had escaped from a bad thing called "abstraction" and arrived at a good thing called "concreteness". The difficulty, however, is that Marx seems to have had no grip on history at all. It is no accident, as they say in these circles, that he did badly in the subject at school. Thus in *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels tell us that "it involves before everything else eating and drinking, housing, clothing and various other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself."

This sort of remark is starkly typical of most occasions when Marx invoked history, by which he actually meant an evolving structure, highly abstract in its specifications, unfolding according to discoverable laws. The "first historical act" is based not on the slightest whiff of historical evidence, but is derived from an abstract universal, namely, that human beings are organisms. And it is that early argument, Marx believed himself, to be confuting a Hegelian belief to the effect that human beings are ideas-entailing creatures, a view which Marx belabours with the nutritive fundamentalism of "man must eat", supported by a saturation bombardment of words like "real", "definite", "specific" and "concrete" itself. The theory may be right or wrong, but it is unmistakably abstract. It could hardly be anything else.

What makes sense of this, curious form of intellectual laziness, of course, the ghost of the Hegelian concrete universal, here shrunk to a piece of dogmatism, which affirms that, my universals are better than yours. "Individuals" is a bad abstraction,

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Outsize egos

Patrick Collinson

A. L. ROWSE

Eminent Elizabethans
199pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 333 34515 0

The title and the strategy derive, A. L. Rowse explains, from the innocent ardour of his youth. He then intended and still half intends an echo of Lytton Strachey and his method, but at the same time a kind of anti-Strachey. This is another distillation of the "spirit" of the Elizabethan age, conjured up in full-length portraits of five of its worthies. But whereas Strachey was an exorcist, purging the Victorianism out of himself and his generation, Dr Rowse is a celebrant, the enthusiasm of his earlier years only a little muted in these autumnal studies. To be sure his eminent Elizabethans make an odd bunch: Bess of Hardwick, "builder and dynast"; the Jesuit Robert Parsons; Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford; Lord Burghley's unsatisfactory son-in-law; the suave Sir John Harrington, the Queen's godson; and her stuffy "downright" (Harrington's word for him) first cousin, Lord Hunsdon. But faith in the Zeitgeist of the kind which Rowse affirmed in his trilogy *The*

Elizabethan Age is well able to unite five such disparate individuals. For by means of a paradox even the anti-Elizabethan Parsons can be made to square up as a bold, intemperate activist, "the possessor of an outsize ego".

These are, as Dame Veronica Wedgwood long ago called a work in the same genre, "velvet studies" (for Thomas Fuller, history was "a velvet study and recreation work") which will be enjoyed without undue strain by readers previously unacquainted with Elizabethan history. For those at home in the period and who know the author of old, there is a series of reunions in store with familiar hobby-horses: the identity of Shakespeare's Dark Lady, the astrological geologist, Simon Forman and his clients, Elizabethan sexual aversion (represented on this occasion by the Earl of Oxford), and much snobbish misanthropy. "Ordinary people, though they do not know it, cannot think," Not so Dr Rowse. We read again about Sir Walter Raleigh's clandestine marriage "which no-one knew anything about until I discovered the secret." The pellucid Calvin is yet again called "indigestible", the religious passions of Reformation and Counter Reformation once more dismissed as senseless sound and fury. "What," asks Dr Rowse without pausing for an answer,

"is an enlightened mind to think of either side in the regrettable conflict?"

But there is more to this book than prejudice and vanity. There is the usual gazetteer-like command of the texture of Elizabethan relationships, with their many crossings and recrossings of paths, the dense thickets of kinship and marriage, friendships and quarrels. And there is some new research. Rowse has read all of Parsons's religious works, presumably as an act of exorcising penance. And more agreeably, he has passed three or four summers at Hardwick Hall, whither Bess's papers were helpfully conveyed from Chatsworth by the late Duchess of Devonshire. So there are new secrets to be shared, of which the most interesting is the convincing identification of the two leading and cryptically named characters in Harrington's Epigrams. Paulus, obviously, is Raleigh, Faustus Ben Jonson. How could we have been so blind? "Ordinary people are imperceptive."

Three of the five subjects are either out of place in a gathering of eminent Elizabethans or ill at ease in the company of the author. Perhaps Hunsdon would not have been included in the party but for a sustained interest in the theatre, demonstrated in his patronage of the company and enterprise in which Shakespeare

became involved. As for the 17th Earl of Oxford, there was nothing amenable about him, apart from the length of his pedigree. Here Rowse's perspective is properly Stracheyan, exposing the unacceptable face of the Elizabethan age, arrogant, spendthrift, self-gratifying to the point of self-destruction. Oxford wrote: "Always I have and I will still prefer mine own content before others." Even Rowse has soon had enough of this unpleasant man who "accomplished nothing with his life."

In handling Parsons the author ties one hand behind his back by his indifference to the cause and the values to which the Jesuit devoted his whole life: in a word, religion. We are told that "nothing is more tedious than religious controversy, for it is mostly about non-sense issues." Although Rowse finds the source of so much tedious "fascinating" in his duplicity and Lenin-like sense of the priority of power, it is rather as if the author of a biography of Mozart were to apologize for the music while applauding the composer's youthful high spirits.

So we are left with Harrington and Bess of Hardwick, both eminent beyond question and both very much at home in Rowse's company. On Harrington, an underestimated man of letters and of many other parts, Rowse writes appreciatively and indeed delightfully, warming to the attractive virtues of a man whose irrepressible wit could not conceal his humanity and his enlightened interest in such good causes as domestic sanitation (treated in his scatological satire *The Metamorphosis of Ajax*) and the re-roofing of Bath Abbey.

But the palm goes to the formidable and much married Bess of Hardwick

who, Queen Elizabeth would have been interested to learn, was "the most remarkable woman in Elizabethan England". With her sterling, self-made qualities, and especially her sense of the value of money and capacity to make it (but also to be generous in the dispensing of it) Bess arouses Rowse's deepest admiration. He confesses to having bestowed "a chastekiss" on the marble forehead of her effigy in All Saints, Derby. And Bess, through her scrupulously copious household accounts and many peremptory letters, has reciprocated by giving herself. The result is Rowse at his best, at home among the crowded and rather vulgar architecture, furnishings, pictures, menus and lawsuits, surveying the some historical Galsworthy marriages cemented in property and the property transactions consummated in marriage, not to speak of the messy sequels as marriages and settlements came unstuck, leaving only Bess and the Cavendish empire and the three other dukedoms which she and her tribe bequeathed to posterity.

But what does it all signify? Rowse may well be, as the blur assures us, "the leading authority on the Elizabethan age", and Lytton Strachey not even, as he tells us, a "true or 'real' historian". If I wanted to know who in Elizabethan England seduced, sued, sodomized or soiled whom, I should certainly ask Dr Rowse. But lacking the point of *Eminent Victorians*, *Eminent Elizabethans* is perhaps unlikely to wear as well, or its turn to invite the sincerest form of flattery, sixty-five years from now. Be in the mean time, let us hope that the book is enjoyed by the lady to whom it is dedicated, that latter-day Bess of Hardwick, Mrs Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

A demon after all

R. L. Storey

DESMOND SEWARD

Richard III: England's Black Legend
220pp. Country Life Books. £9.95.
0 600 36850 5

The fifth century of Richard III's blood-stained accession may be thought to justify yet another "life", and this one should certainly be welcomed for its many excellent black-and-white plates. It is less likely that Desmond Seward's portrayal of Richard as a Machiavellian prince will receive general favour. The publishers claim that this is a controversial book, assuming that the reading public is now convinced that Richard was innocent of the crimes alleged by the Tudor press, a view from which the author confesses himself a recent apostate.

Richard's modern champions have usually been initially provoked by Shakespeare's caricature of the demon-king. A historical drama first produced at the end of Elizabeth I's reign could hardly be expected to show Richard III sympathetically or with any attempt at fidelity. An official history of fifteenth-century England had been established in the public mind through the school curriculum. The purpose of that history was to teach Tudor subjects that rebellion against their anointed sovereign was a heinous sin; the calamities, grotesquely exaggerated, of the years before 1485 were God's punishment of a seditious people.

Unfortunately for this propaganda, the Tudor dynasty had won the crown through the defeat and death of an unloved king. It was therefore essential that this King Richard III, should be recognized as a tyrant so monstrous that rebellion against him was justified. His supplanter, Henry VII, might then be revered as a national saviour and his house as England's guarantee against chaos. This myth was invoked by Henry VIII to warrant acts of state; it had a valuable role in preserving national unity, particularly after "the reformation", because Protestants and Catholics shared a dread of risking a return to the horrors associated with the Wars of the Roses. Richard III's reputation suffered for the common good.

Sir George Buck's history of the reign, posthumously published in 1646, made the first criticism of the received tradition. Next came Horace Walpole's *Historic Doubts* (1768), while in the present century Sir

Clemens Markham (1906) and Josephine Tey (1951) inspired a virtual crusade to rehabilitate the slandered hero and incriminate others for his alleged crimes. I recall from my time as an assistant keeper in the Public Record Office a succession of visitors to its Round Room already determined to write books proving Richard's innocence and only wanting some documentary proof; and the displeasure expressed to the Office by their society's secretary when Richard was referred to as a usurper in an exhibition catalogue in 1961. The Richard III Society still flourishes, but it now promotes more pragmatic research to improve knowledge of those aspects of English life during his reign which remain obscurely recorded in manuscript sources. Serendipity may yet illumine the darkness enshrouding the king's actions.

In the meanwhile, Mr Seward has re-examined the limited and unsatisfactory narratives of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. He rejects Alison Hanham's thesis in *Richard III and his Early Historians* (1975) that Sir Thomas More's *History* (1543) was a "satirical drama" and he lists among "contemporary" sources: More's reputation is surely for his truthfulness, and he doubtless had information preserved by oral tradition over the thirty years since his own early boyhood in Richard's reign. Sometimes other narratives may be cited to support More's allegations.

Richard's initiation to murder as an instrument of policy began in 1471. He was not "precoziously mature" at the age of eighteen; any prince would then be considered old enough to hold important military command, and a large proportion of all combatants in the Wars of the Roses were probably teenagers. As the loyal brother of King Edward IV, he had shared the brief exile and fought prominently to recover the throne from the hapless Lancastrian, Henry VI. Richard would have, undoubtedly, been privy to Edward's designs to eliminate enemies, and Seward is justified in claiming that the older brother's ruthlessness must have influenced the development of Richard's character.

It defies belief, however, that Richard murdered the ex-king, not only with his own hands, but at his own initiative. On this point More's "oral tradition" must be rejected. His silence on the obvious responsibility of Edward IV is easily explicable. Edward was "the grandfather of More's master, Henry VIII." As elsewhere in his *History*, More's conscience accommodated a concern to protect the reputation of the Tudor Yorkist forebear. No one carried a watching brief for Richard III.

Abducting his mother-in-law was too least of his crimes. The catalogue need not be stretched by speculation about his failure to urge Edward to spare his brother, the duke of Clarence. The king would not "undoubtedly" have yielded to Richard's intercession. Clarence had been tried and condemned for treason in a parliament called for that purpose. More's insinuation that Richard now (1478) assumed to succeed Edward as king does not merit elevation to the status of evidence.

Richard certainly exploited the opportunity of Edward's premature death on April 9, 1483. It is arguable that self-protection was his initial purpose, an explanation most recently offered by Charles Ross in his *Richard III* (1981). Following More, Seward contends that Richard must have had well-developed plans for this contingency. The exemplary fate of Clarence would surely have counselled otherwise.

At whatever point in the struggle for power Richard determined to replace his youthful nephew, Edward V, his methods were efficiently ruthless. Seward firmly disposes of the twelfth-century myth of Richard's loyalty to Edward IV by quoting the propaganda justifying the usurpation. The grisly account of these critical weeks is confounded by Seward's acceptance of Hanham's argument that the judicial murder of Lord Hastings took place on June 20. Half-a-dozen other scholars have confirmed the traditional date from a range of sources. It was Friday the thirteenth, before the younger prince was removed from Westminster's sanctuary to the Tower.

That the two boys were dead by August 1483, may well be true. Former servants of Edward IV were soon afterwards conspiring in the belief that Richard had killed them, and recognized that illicitly obtained and Henry Tudor, as their king, Richard had destroyed the unity of Yorkist England. It largely disowned him in August 1485. Even his bones were denied a lasting grave.

Preambles to statutes were in general terms, Henry VII's first parliament knew well enough which "infants blood" had been shed by Richard III. Factual errors also betray Mr Seward's unfamiliarity with the background to his story. Winchester, not Durham, was England's wealthiest diocese. Whatever canon law claimed, English canon law allowed no benefit of clergy to traitors. It may perhaps therefore be a point in Richard's favour that he did not also behead Bishop Morton on that fatal Friday.

Dislocating the dogmas

H. R. Woudhuysen

ALAN SINFIELD

Literature in Protestant England
1560-1660.
160pp. Croom Helm/Barnes and Noble. £11.95.
0 7099 2367 8

Rejecting the influence of Erasmian Christian humanism and the importance of Richard Hooker and Anglican compromise, Alan Sinfield in *Literature in Protestant England 1560-1660*, asserts that the Elizabethan Church "doctrinally, was broadly Calvinist" with a "provocative, hard-lino theology" which ascribed "overwhelming power to an intrusive personalized God". This leads on to the assumption that there existed an "official doctrine" and an "officially approved belief" with an "official explanation of the universe". Given this rigorous dogmatic background *Literature and Protestantism* sets out what the "official" view of a subject was and then shows how writers of the period reflect, but often also challenge and undermine it. So that "Donne's poems of reciprocated, fulfilling and enduring sexual love" derive "from the Protestant conception of matrimonial harmony" with its "new and positive conception of fulfilled sexual love". On the other hand, where Protestantism is characterized by an absolute "polarization of good and evil" Macbeth defies this either/or division by making us admire his "stand against the whole universe".

This "study in cultural dislocation" (or of "a fundamentally dislocated culture") and "ideological disjunction" extends to an examination of the relationships between Protestantism and literature, based on pagan models, whose main concerns emerge as love, heroism and tragedy. In a final chapter Sinfield seeks to explain why Protestantism contained the seeds of its own destruction and how the triumph of a secularist society and literature came about.

The problem is that by positing a monolithic, received Protestant dogma Sinfield makes no allowance for the being any historical development in theology or literature during the

century he discusses. It is this dogma, a historical context for religious writing which the book's disturbing feature. It largely avoids the complexities of Protestantism on the one hand and the nature of individual and popular belief. The close reading of some parts of poems and plays is often illuminating, as when Sinfield writes about "standing" in Milton, but generally his critical accounts are too patchy to be satisfying and some of his discussions have an air of weary inconclusiveness about them. Although they are presented as definitive statements, he does not seem happy with Spenserian allegory, and suggests *The Faerie Queene* is a "context of collapsing values". Astrophil's "whole problem" is reduced to "Stella's virtue". Adam feels "because he makes us 'us' and King Lear makes us 'us'". The possibility that a universe is governed... by these and other arbitrary forces. These may be useful pages for which to hang examination questions, but they do not add to our understanding of the penitence of reading English Renaissance literature.

There are some other rather curious features to this book. Poems of Donne and Marvell appear as "dust-wrappers" but there is no mention of Marvell in its text. The book's subtitle is referred to on page 4 and does not appear on its title-page. A footnote on page 100 states that "Protestantism and literature are cited in a footnote". Sinfield makes no attempt to deal with the views of such writers as Blaise Pascal, Lancelotti, Stanley E. Fish or John Donne. The only recent critic to appear in the book is John Carey, whose *John Donne: Life, Mind and Work* is mentioned in a puzzling section of footnotes. Perhaps the "modernist" limitation to Sinfield's account of Protestantism is his failure to deal with its political dimension. While Machiavelli figures in the book, as he does in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, the influence of Protestant politics on, for example, Sidney's *Moonlight* is ignored.

All this contributes to a feeling of lop-sidedness, which is not helped by the book's unjustified margins and unpleasing typesetting.

ERIC SALMON

Granville Barker: A Secret Life
354pp. Heinemann. £15.
0 435 18790 2

Harley Granville Barker is still a legendary figure of the theatre. His birth, like that of other mythical characters of the time, Edward Gordon Craig and T. E. Lawrence, was enveloped in mystery. On the certificate his father's name appeared as Albert James Barker whose occupation was given as "Gentleman". Elsewhere, though not with much conviction, he was spoken of as an architect. It was also said that he would sometimes expand with pride over his family connections, but as no one quite knew what these were, this did not signify much. Eventually he wandered off into France and died. It was rumoured, of consumption.

The dominating figure of Barker's upbringing (as with Gordon Craig and T. E. Lawrence) was his mother. She was a well-known elocutionist with approximately half the name of an Italian brigand. Bossi-Granville. As a boy, Barker used to perform precociously at her literary recitals; and all his adult life he kept in a silver locket a picture of her before her marriage. She did not risk sending him to school, but nurtured him in an atmosphere of good speech and drama where he picked up a wide knowledge of Dickens and Shakespeare.

As he grew up, Barker had difficulty in establishing his masculinity and with it a clear sense of his identity. According to Beatrice Webb he was "a most attractive person - young and good looking in a charming refined fashion - with a subtle intellectual expression". But she added: "I do not yet see a very definite whole." It was this incompleteness that bewildered and fascinated people. He could be sensitive, charming; but he could also appear peculiarly intemperate and cold-blooded. Though successful at an early age as an actor, he was plagued with depression. Like T. E. Lawrence he seemed all things to all men - a character that may have special uses on the stage. With Bernard Shaw and his wife Charlotte, first Barker and then Lawrence established a special kinship; and at different times there was a good deal of gossip to the effect that each was the illegitimate son of GBS.

Eric Salmon, who has ostensibly aimed his book at destroying what he calls "the Barker Legend", is a bit of a romantic. He cannot resist fantastical speculation. His first chapter begins with a Mysterious Envelope said to contain "secret and shocking" information about Barker that mysteriously disappeared when it was supposed to be opened on the centenary of Barker's birth. He then observes that "Shaw treated Barker as if he were his son". The two men, he adds, were "remarkably close" at the Court Theatre. Sometimes they went on holiday together. What explanation could there be, he wonders, for the fact that Shaw lent Barker quite large sums of money and then "unhesitatingly cancelled the debts on those occasions upon which the financial burden on Barker became too much"? Barker was, too, "a constant visitor to the Shaw house, treating it at times as if it was 'his own home'". As a special exhibit, Professor Salmon produces a shabby suit of clothes that Barker kept there during part of the First World War.

There is more evidence too: a photograph, for example, of Shaw and Barker sitting together in which they look "so much alike" that they might be the same man. Why was Barker's half-life in cover with the name "Shaw"? The answer, he claims, is that he does not resemble Shaw at all. Barker's "operation" made rather a handsome person of him. There are a few tricks up his sleeve. When Barker played Tanner in *Main and Superman* he was made up to look like GBS. "And one last point, coincidental": "Both men had red hair. That surely should clinch it - but not quite. For their hair was 'of different shades', apparently." The conclusion followed by "apparently"

seems sinister, especially when you take into account that GBS was a music critic and Barker's mother was fond of imitating bird-song. In a doubly pregnant paragraph Salmon explains that Shaw had come to London almost eighteen months before Barker was born. He often appeared at local concerts and occasionally accompanied his sister's singing at the piano.



Bernard Shaw and Granville Barker

She also, let it be noted, had red hair. It was not unlikely, then, that Shaw dropped in to listen to a little bird-mimicry and found himself overcome by the charms of "Miss Granville" as Barker's mother innocently styled herself. Here are the methods of Dr Watson at his best. Salmon owns that he can provide few reference notes as support and urges us to remember that this does not amount to conclusive proof. Nevertheless: "it does suggest a reasonable possibility to which later events tend to give an additional degree of credibility."

There is less credibility in these pages than credulity - a credulity that in a less blatant manner pervades the whole book. Salmon's thesis is interesting. He believes that, contrary to what was popularly supposed, Barker never deserted the theatre in the middle of his career. He simply "moved into a different department of it". His *Prefaces to Shakespeare* and other critical writings, together with his last unperformed plays, *His Majesty* and *The Secret Life*, were "tied absolutely" to the theatre: "the theatre is in the very life-blood of them and he writes, with modesty but with complete assurance, as a man of the theatre." The most that Salmon will allow is that in the final decade of his life Barker began to "despair of a theatre which seems incapable of providing him with the right kind of audience or the right kind of actors or the right kind of organization for new plays of a really challenging kind". Barker's sense of frustration with the contemporary theatre, Salmon believes, came from his "blazingly uncompromising idealism". Though he almost never entered a theatre for over a quarter of a century, he remained "a complete *homme de théâtre*". In the sense that he was trying to (re)create the theatre into another form of art altogether, a form so tenuous that it could not live in the rough air of public performance.

Though ill-equipped to deal with the ironies and inconsequences of life, Salmon is in some way an appropriate critic for Barker. He has studied his work in detail, cared about it passionately, and devotes to it the kind of "scholarship and intense" which Barker himself directed at Shakespeare. He does not connect the writings to the life, which he deliberately makes "secret" by omitting facts, but to the machinery of the stage. But since he has less theatre experience than Barker his criticism is correspondingly less sophisticated. The book reads more like a succession of lectures (he uses the word "say" instead of "write") or contributions to scholarly journals rather than an integrated single work. He refers to a photograph "opposite page 18" of C. B. Purdom's biography of Barker, evidently unaware that it has already appeared in his own book opposite

Michael Holroyd

page 8. He frequently instructs us to "note" this or "notice" that as if we were in a classroom. In an attempt to tie the chapters together he switches us rapidly backwards and forwards: "as for example, pages 107 and 117 of this present book," which has already been mentioned in Chapter 6, "as was mentioned in Chapter 8," "something

public realm", he joins with her in the challenging theatrical neglect these late plays have suffered. His persistence and earnestness are impressive enough to establish, if not a favourable verdict, at least a prima facie case that should be tested by the National Theatre or the Royal Shakespeare Company, both of which have recently produced early Barker plays.

Salmon argues that Barker's character moves "in a secret world of their own which their souls struggle to find and, having found, then defend as best they may against the tyrannies of both communal and domestic living, against the depredations of both public and private life. And the best defence, Barker's work constantly says, is 'secret'." In other words he searched for his identity through his work, which was given dramatic tension by a personality that today might be described as manic-depressive. Salmon's extreme critical sympathy evokes a good subjective description of Barker's guiding principles as a dramatist. Almost all the plays, he writes, chafe "the commerce between secret and sex and between both of them and the outside world". *The Secret Life*, for example, brings together the two main instincts of Barker's world: "the necessity of living alone and in secret; and the mysteriousness of the force of sex on the patterns of civilized living". But though it is true that *Waste* (a play about sex), the dominant imagery (as Salmon concedes) is barrenness.

The central question arising from these last plays is whether they are sterile: stillborn and beautifully embalmed creatures of Barker's fastidious mind, conceived for a Utopian theatre of his imagination. "Feel deeply enough to do desperate things - whether they're silly or whether they're mad", says one of the characters in his unfinished play *The Wicked Man* - "we could alter the

Further will be said in Chapter 11," "as was suggested in Chapter 7" and so on. Barker's career was divided into three sections. About his abilities as an actor there need be no dispute. The best drama critics of the day - William Archer, Max Beerbohm and Desmond MacCarthy - all agree that, though he had a tendency to underplay some parts, he was a subtle and poetic performer with the ability to lift a whole cast. But he did not much enjoy acting. "I do believe my present loathing for the theatre is loathing for the audience," he wrote in 1918. "I have never loved them."

His achievement as a producer (what he would now call director) was more original and controversial. He revolutionized stage production in England by introducing the repertory system, eliminating "stars" in favour of teamwork, and replacing the old actor-manager with the new director - "the one person whose only job", Salmon writes, "was to co-ordinate the functions of all the others, to give pattern and coherence to the whole play, to conceive an overall interpretation of the piece which would faithfully reflect the author's intention". Actors sometimes found his instructions alarming. "I want you when you enter to give the impression of a man who is steeped in the poetry of Tennyson", he is reported to have told Dennis Eadie. His psychological approach very reasonably suggests to Salmon a parallel with Stanislavsky. But it is unfortunate, when establishing Barker's "absolute faithfulness to the text of the play and the discernible intention of the author", to compare him with the man who motivated Chakovsky by taking on to the text all sorts of ludicrous events (such as candlesticks falling off the table) which people are dancing in *The Cherry Orchard*.

As a playwright Barker has often been compared with Chekhov, and it is here that his reputation is most in question. The general opinion among theatre people was that Helen Huntington, a rich American divorcee with literary and social pretensions, made him throw over the stage after their marriage in 1918. She provided him with a luxurious style of life into which he could retreat and where he could compose unfinished and unperformed plays and academic papers about the theatre he almost never went to. This picture of him, which was established in the public mind by C. B. Purdom, is energetically disputed by Salmon. He unfolds long plot summaries and generous extracts, and though his approach is completely different from that of Marger Morgan, whose interesting book *Dream of Political Man* invites us to see Barker's heroes as reaching "the fulfilment of their moral being in the

Etymologies and Genealogies

A Literary Anthropology of the French Middle Ages
R. HOWARD BLOCH

Drawing upon the work of the *Annales* school, traditional literary scholarship, and contemporary critical theory, Bloch crosses the usual bounds between ethnology, philology, philosophy, economics, and history to establish the relation between language theory, family structure, and poetics in the High Middle Ages. His analysis reveals how the basically "etymological" character of early medieval grammar served to inform the disciplines of history, theology, and biblical exegesis and to sustain a pattern of noble family relations dominant until the French Revolution. Genealogy as a principle of noble kinship was further mediated through a range of specifically aristocratic symbolic practices - heraldry, patronymies, the visual arts, genealogical narrative, and poetry. Bloch explores the key roles played by vernacular literature in the formation of the early modern family and state, and his brilliant and original readings of the major Old French and Provencal works serve to place the epic, romance, and lyric within a highly ritualized performative space between ideology and institutions. *Moy, £23.20*

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translated & edited by
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One of the five monumental classics of traditional Chinese fiction, *The Journey to the West* (Shi-yu chi) recounts the fantastic tale of the 16 year pilgrimage of the monk Hsüan-tsang (696-664), who journeyed to India to bring back more than 600 items of Buddhist scripture. *The Journey to the West*, combining religious allegory with romance, fantasy, humour and satire, was published in 1592. Volume 4 completes Yu's translation. *Moy, £28.00*

"Whatever flesh and blood could do to translate and present *The Journey to the West* to the English-language public, Professor Yu has done magnificently. The translation reads excellently, at all levels of style appropriate to the original prose and verse." - Robert Murray, *Heythrop Journal*

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CHICAGO

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commentary

A collector of curiosities

Blair Worden

Elias Ashmole: a tercentenary exhibition
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Would Elias Ashmole (1617-1692) qualify for an exhibition in any year other than a centenary of the museum which has kept his name alive? Probably not. Yet when the Ashmolean was opened at Oxford by James Duke of York in May 1683, in the building in the Broad which now houses the History of Science Museum, Ashmole was (or so he said) too busy in London to attend. Contemporaries esteemed him as a writer, an astrologer, a herald, a courtier. His virtuous collection of pictures and prints, coins and medals, books and manuscripts, may have been more than a sideline, although it would have been still more impressive but for the fire which destroyed his rooms in the Middle Temple in 1679. In any case, the centrepiece of the Museum was not his own creation but the Tradescant collection which he inherited. Even that celebrated accumulation of natural and other curiosities may have appealed to Oxford's governors primarily because they saw in its acquisition the chance of a site, and of a fund, for the teaching of natural science.

Whatever kept Ashmole from the royal opening, it will not have been political disaffection. Only weeks afterwards Oxford burned those seditious works of Milton and Hobbes which were held to have sustained the Whigs during the Exclusion crisis. Ashmole would have relished the Tory triumph. He had been a devoted even, an obsessive royalist since his years in Civil War Oxford. All his life he sought order, stability, hierarchy. Under what he called "the upstart Commonwealth" he found refuge in the esoteric sciences



A portrait of Elias Ashmole by John Riley, c. 1682, from the exhibition reviewed here. Ashmole is depicted with a volume of his history of the Order of the Garter.

of astrology and alchemy, "mysteries" which were "incommunicable to any but the Adepts", but which had been vulgarized and discredited by Civil War quacks. Like the Elizabethan magi whom he revered, Ashmole searched for a hierarchical system of correspondences which would disclose

the secrets of nature, support revealed religion, improve the material and spiritual condition of men and enable them to master the universe. These heroic aspirations were conventional enough in the Royal Society, of which Ashmole was an early member. But while his learning was formidable and

his influence extensive, no one could credit him with a sharply original mind.

In the 1650s Ashmole found a new interest, in heraldry. This, too, was a subject for depth, romantic and exact, rich in hierarchical subtlety, and a profitable specialism in an age which hungered for antiquity and authenticity. His chosen research topic was the Order of the Garter, which Charles I had made a cult of majesty in the 1630s, and which offered a cult of consolation to royalists after the King's execution, an event which affected Ashmole deeply. The result, his crowning achievement, was his history of the Order published and presented to the King in 1672: "a precious monument", as Anthony Wood called it. Ashmole holds it proudly in the familiar (and, painted when he was thirty-five, surely somewhat flattering) portrait of him which hangs in the Ashmolean in Grinling Gibbons's ornate frame. How Ashmole savoured the details of ceremony and procession, and how unerringly his critical eye would detect, at a St George's Day Feast or a noble funeral, an earl's costume of the material or the length appropriate to a marquis, or a knight Privy Councillor wrongly placed ahead of a baron's eldest son. Standards, he sighed, were not what they had been.

Ashmole's arcane interests did not seclude him from the world. The son of a rising Lichfield merchant, he married a rich widow and cultivated his fortune and his career with a shrewd and dogged egotism. At the Restoration in 1660, fortune and monarchy smiled upon him. Within months he became Comptroller of the Excise (a post which he discharged competently into William III's reign) and Windsor Herald (a position he resigned in 1675, apparently after one of the quarrels which enlivened the envy-charged College of Arms). His astrological prowess was in frequent demand from leading politicians, who submitted

detailed questions about political conflicts. Perhaps his prophecies, firmly Tory, became self-fulfilling. They did not cost him the warm friendship of that other major political astrologer, William Lilly, whose predictions were less pleasing to the Stuart cause.

One ambition eluded Ashmole: to serve as MP for his native city. He should be glad that he tried, for among the gifts with which he signalled his affection for Lichfield was an expensive silver cup which is the gem of its exhibition. Otherwise there are few surprises. Perhaps it is impossible, on a low budget, to convey in one exhibition a sense of the detail and the diversity of Ashmole's expertise. A few books and manuscripts opened at a single page (or in some cases no page at all) will not take one to the heart of the matter. Some of the pictures are of questionable relevance. As often happens, the strength of the exhibition lies in its catalogue (*Elias Ashmole and his World*, edited by Michael Hunter, 92pp, Ashmolean Museum, £28). Michael Hunter has written an elegant account of Ashmole's career as an earl's costume of the material or the length appropriate to a marquis, or a knight Privy Councillor wrongly placed ahead of a baron's eldest son. Standards, he sighed, were not what they had been.

The tercentenary is also to see a collection of essays on the foundation of the Ashmolean, and an edition of the catalogue of the Tradescant collection which Ashmole helped to compile. It is an occasion to celebrate not merely a collection but a tradition. The Tradescant curiosities were used by numerous visitors at Lambeth before they came to Oxford; and the start the Ashmolean broke as ground by opening its doors to the public. In the story of the printed influence which museums have exercised on English culture, Ashmole plays an important, even unwitting part.

The exhibition is at the Ashmolean Museum until July 31.

A Russian abroad

Elizabeth Winter

A Month in the Country
Victoria and Albert Museum

It was only a few years before Turgenev's death in 1883 that *A Month in the Country* had its first successful performance at the Alexandrinsky Theatre in St Petersburg. Turgenev was delighted; he had long ceased to write for the theatre, having accepted the general view that his early attempts were too literary and not sufficiently dramatic for the stage. Significantly, it was only after Stanislavsky's production at the Moscow Arts Theatre in 1909, sixty years after it was written, that the full psychological interest in the play was revealed.

A small, sensory exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum takes as its theme this play which has become a favourite with actors and audiences alike. The first room contains a display of the background to Turgenev's links with the theatre. The chief interest lies in his friendship with Pauline Viardot, the Spanish opera singer, to whom Turgenev became devoted after hearing her sing in the early 1840s in St Petersburg, and with her husband, Louis Viardot, journalist, art critic and translator. Their house at Courtavenne became a favourite home for Turgenev during his frequent visits to France. The Viardots counted, among their friends, Chopin, Liszt, Glinka, Dostoevsky. Here they are represented by little known photographs, mostly from private collections, drawings, some by Pauline Viardot herself, and books on which they collaborated. The most curious items are two unpublished scenarios for Jiberti in Turgenev's hand, one based on Pushkin's *Capitaine Corcoran*.

This evocation of a mid-nineteenth century salon (wallpaper by Osborne and Little, music by Chopin), with its leading dramatic personae, clearly conveys the attraction this artistic milieu held for Turgenev, *le doux géant* from enigmatic Russia. But, although fluent in French and German, Turgenev never attempted to write in any language other than Russian and despite his many years abroad, he remains the chronicler par excellence of the aspirations of the Russian intelligentsia.

It is the Russianess of his work which is emphasized in the second room of this exhibition, which is dominated by the costumes for the 1981 National Theatre production of *A Month in the Country* set against a large canvas backdrop of birch trees (based

A Wordsworthian Sonnet for Arnold
Feinstein, who mended my spectacles
in Yugoslavia

Feinstein, critic of proven worth!
O Saviour of my spectacles! Thou that didst know
Exactly where that tiny screw should go
And how to place it there! O fall on earth
Thou that thou of such me there is dearth
Great Scientists that yet will stoop so low!
To mend *Mechanical* Our Life cannot show
A truer Nobleness, or of such pure birth
Yet thou, by Struga, in that moving coach,
Spokest like a didact work upon the leas
With aptitude more great than other men's
Re-introducing the O'edread approach
Of bookish blindness from which I was set free
When Patra ordained that thou shouldst next to me!

Gavin Ewan

City scenes

Stephen Wall

THOMAS MIDDLETON and
THOMAS DEKKER

The Roaring Girl
Barbican Theatre

The RSC offers this rarely performed play as a companion piece to its current production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, and although the shrew and the rooster differ a good deal in their ideas about the woman's role, we are no doubt meant to go away pondering the feminist implications. The Barbican is in any case a natural venue for Middleton's and Dekker's city comedy, and the company sets about recreating its neighbourhood as it used to be with characteristic energy. Their manner of doing so is perhaps in danger of becoming repetitive: it would be a pity if a stage economy expressed by ropes, bales, and barrels were to set into a predictable house-style. As usual, any opportunity to live up to the text by converting bits of it into production numbers is eagerly grasped by the large cast, and an alert theatrical opportunism ensures that a good time is had by all.

Admittedly, *The Roaring Girl* often gives the impression of being thrown together. Intrigues by predatory gallants and city wives not averse to a bit on the side, schemes by young

couples to defeat parental opposition obsessed by mercantile ambition, — these after all are the staple plot-fodder of the period, and are better articulated in some of Middleton's other early comedies. This company presents these elements with sufficient conviction even if its approach leans more towards the sentimental tolerance generally associated with Dekker than to the heady-eyed realism which Middleton shows elsewhere. It is not difficult to imagine an interpretation which would bring out in a more unsettling way the problems of keeping one's cash or one's wife to oneself in a world in which the constant struggle for advantage among the respectable. The scenes in which the shop-keepers forgive their wives for their fairly venial errors briefly suggest areas of feeling which could, given a more sombre style, be more fully explored. Nevertheless, the director Barry Kyle has given Masters Openwork, Gallipot and Tilyard a persuasively bustling environment, with plenty of convincing but not too obtrusive stage business developed from an often bare text. He is particularly helped in this by the long scene in Act II organized round the three shops in which the action develops with remarkable fluidity; it demonstrates strikingly what possibilities the street scene has.

The treatment of the love-story is understandably less inventive, since it is so conventionally written. David Waller, as the tyrannical father, does his reliable best to gloss over the inherent contradiction between his unscrupulous opposition to his son's match and his final more generous capitulation to it — an inconsistency that it is again tempting to see in terms of a conflict between Middleton's shrewd sense of things as they regrettably but undeniably are, and Dekker's easy-going desire to pretend that they are otherwise.

Any thinness in these areas is probably attributable to the greater interest of the play's real heroine, and certainly Helen Mirren's performance as the roaring girl herself is an entirely adequate justification for this revival. Moll's real-life original Mary Frith was noted for always wearing men's clothes and generally behaving in a manner inappropriate for her sex. In the present climate of gender-indeterminacy such conduct is bound to seem less shocking; the fact that Miss Mirren spends much of the time in a pair of Jacobean culottes is agreeable but not surprising. This actress is clearly one of the lads but she's a good girl too; her glamour is made raucous but not butch. As a result she strikes a happy balance between casual knock-about vitality and rather feminine sympathy. Eliza wrote rather solemnly of Moll's "noble womanhood" living for principle, and in those moments when she asserts the rights of women over

Nullified nuptials

Peter Kemp

When We Are Married
Dear Countess
Radio 4

Nullified nuptials figured prominently in Radio 4's schedule for May Day. In the afternoon, there was J.B. Priestley's *When We Are Married*; to the evening, Elizabeth Morgan's *Dear Countess*, a dramatized account of Ruskin's marriage.

Written in the 1930s, though set at the beginning of the century, *When We Are Married* offered a jovial exercise in bashing the bourgeoisie. Tremors go through a stout-stomached group of Yorkshire worthies with the news that their triple wedding ceremony — the silver-anniversary of which they're assembled to celebrate with High Tea and port wine — may not have been properly performed. Traditional figures — a pert, narrating maid, a disruptive and irreputable character — establish that the play is farce. But, as such, it is rather disappointing: where it should be fast, unfeeling, and streamlined, the play may be located in a textile town, but its plot is slackly woven, with a very perfunctory final tying up of things. Nor — though a rudimentary feminist thesis pokes out occasionally — is there much thematic edge: the play's sharper points are quickly muffled in a woolly if witty flexibility. Not that it's entirely cosy. Repeatedly and savingly, it is given some irrevocable vigour by its dialogue — broad, bawled, robustly idiosyncratic speech, artfully peppered with quirky local detail. Thanks to this — and a cast of actors — retelling its Yorkshire regionalism — often made entertaining listening.

Dear Countess also looked at, the way marital appearances can be deceptive, peering at Ruskin's inability to consummate his partnership with Eliza Gray. The play, opened with Eliza's marriage to Ruskin, and closed as she married Mills. Bird-song and wholesome ope-act effects made it clear that the latter wedding was reassuringly natural. Sonic accompaniment to the Ruskin, and closed as a very different order. As the carriage wheels of the departing honeymooners crunched across the grass, the bride's father mused in a bitter, ironic, and his son-in-law: "This is a strange fiddle". Ten years later, Eliza — and not in the mould

of ordinary men". From this point on, the theatrical chime sounded with mechanical frequency. "Next year there's sure to be a bairn", chirped Eliza's mamma; "John is kindness itself — as long as I never interfere with him". Innocently prettified Eliza; "Sitting for Mr Mills may give you an interest", murmured her ambiguous husband.

When not scattering this portentous confetti over its newly-weds, the play provided them with dialogue largely composed of glued-together extracts scissored from the correspondence of Ruskin or Eliza. The result, especially in the case of Ruskin — ponderously endowed with phraseology from formal communications he'd penned — was stuffy pedantic. Nor did the more revealing snippets of correspondence survive their transfer to the play unscathed. In a written statement

Eccentric services

Patricia Craig

MYLES NA O'CAPALEEN
A Herd of Unemployed
Ventriloquists
Cottesloe Theatre

People who fail to recognize the elusion might easily be put off this production on account of its title, which suggests something tiresomely experimental — the kind of thing, in fact, that Plann O'Brien might well have had a go at in the *Irish Times*. However, this one-man entertainment is entirely composed of pieces extracted from the "Crulskéen Lawn", a full jug which he wrote for that paper, under the name of Myles na GCapaleen, in the early 1940s. He often beguiled his readers by concocting some preposterous enterprise with a bearing on Dublin's social life — hence the unemployed ventriloquists who, he explains, have now been organized to provide an esoteric escort service for ladies at a disadvantage through inarticulacy. "The trained escort answers his own mainly questions in a voice far pleasanter than your own unfeminine gasp, and gives answers that will astonish the people behind for their brilliance and sparkle."

So it goes on, hitches, side-effects and all. The sustained flight of fancy was one of Myles na GCapaleen's specialties. Other eccentric services

about the disenchantment marriage brought to his wife and himself, Ruskin was disappointed at finding I could not change her; and she was humiliated and irritated at finding she was humiliated. Morgan's version of this failed to pick up the strategic self-elevation effected by "grieved and disappointed" and the insidious denigration attempted by "humiliated and irritated". In her rendering, Ruskin just flatly stated, "I thought I could change her, and she thought she could change me".

The play not only lost the subtleties of the relationship; it also drastically telescoped its span. There was no explanation of when or how the couple were drawn to each other — though there is surely significance in the fact that Eliza was only twelve when Ruskin

(then twenty-one) first met her: it was she for whom he wrote his children's story, *The King of the Golden River*. Likewise, the breaking apart of the unconsolidated union was disturbingly speeded up. Oddly, the Ruskins' two lengthy stays in Venice went virtually unmentioned and entirely undocumented. Yet it was then that — in addition to the physical incompatibility — differing tastes increasingly pushed them in opposite directions. As Ruskin, in solitude, meditated on Venice's past, Eliza, in society, was participating in its present. While he, encountering the fifteenth-century effigy of Doge Tommaso Mocenigo, sedulously itemized the features that gave it its integrity, she was meeting the old Countess Mocenigo and fascinatedly noticing her "false curls of jet black".

on one occasion, is tracking with deep concentration an escaped chestnut gelding when he bumps into Chapman who comes out with the necessary question: "Dogging a fed horse?" Keats said as he passed by.

What's of necessity missing from the one-man show is the chorus, the Plain People of Ireland whose comments often stick innocently and infinitely to a topic just beside the point: Dublin philistinism, in its various forms, kept the author to a very productive mood of exultation. There is no one else who converts outrage so effectively into a source of entertainment. ("The Plain People of Ireland: Is all this serious?" Overt ferocity, by and large, was kept out of the "Crulskéen Lawn" column until its final years; James Hayes, wisely, has assembled his material from his best-humoured phase.

Elliot College of the University of Kent at Canterbury was host last Sunday May 8 to an afternoon of "Remembering Mr Elliot". Celebrating fifteen years of the T. S. Elliot Memorial Lectures, and taking place under the auspices of the college, the publishers Faber and Faber and Mrs Valerie Elliot, the afternoon's events comprised a showing of the remarkable BBC television film *The Mysterious Mr Elliot*, and personal recollections of Elliot from Joseph Chiari, George Every, T. E. Faber, Donald Galloup, Harry Levin, Peter du Sautoy, Stephen Spender, Denis Donoghue and Frederick Tomlin.

New Oxford Books:

Philosophy
& ReligionThe Expanding
CircleEthics and Sociobiology
Peter Singer

Peter Singer gave the BBC Horizon Lecture in March. His book, which deals with the issues he addressed in that lecture, has been described in *Nature* as an excellent exposition of a most complex problem. Peter Singer has without quotation clarified the many subtleties and singularities involved in the relation between ethics and sociobiology. £7.95

Discerning the
MysteryAn Essay on the Nature
of Theology
Andrew Louth

This book examines the presuppositions of the claims of the Enlightenment, drawing principally on the thought of the Heidelberg philosopher H. G. Gadamer, but also on George Steiner and Michael Polanyi. It shows how the traditional ways of theology can be seen to retain their validity, once the pretensions of the Enlightenment have been exposed. £12.50

Holy Scripture:
Canon, Authority,
Criticism

James Barr

This book discusses the way in which the canon of scripture was formed and the effects that it has, as well as recent suggestions that the canon should be the guiding principle in interpretation. It also considers the importance of the final form of the biblical books, and sets all these questions within the general intellectual history of modern religion. £13 paperback £6.95

Old Catholics and
Anglicans 1931-81

Edited by Gordon Huellin

It is fifty years since the Church of England entered into full communion with the Old Catholic Church. This collection of essays, in which both the Archbishop of Canterbury and the recently retired Archbishop of Utrecht have contributed, celebrates the agreement made at Bonn in 1931. The book, which contains essays by members of both churches, will help towards deeper mutual understanding between them. £12.50

Cyril of Alexandria
— Select LettersEdited by
Lionel R. Wickham

Cyril, bishop of Alexandria from 412 to 444, was in some ways the most influential of all the classic Greek fathers. In Chalcedon all subsequent writers have had to take account of him whether as model or adversary. This book reveals the reasons for his influence, and sets him in his historical and doctrinal context. The extensive notes deal with linguistic, historical, and doctrinal issues raised by the text. £15

Oxford
University Press

Christopher Hitchens

100

Geoffrey Wheatcroft

In terms of British domestic politics, the earlier crisis differed significantly from last year's. The party of peace was Lord North's "imperial" faction, which wanted to subvert the opposition's bellicose "patriots" — jingoes in the parlance — of the opposition. Wanted war at any price, for his own sake, so was to discomfit them and to justify his own policy that North hired Samuel Johnson to write his "Thoughts on the late French Proposals for a Peace with the late Kingdom of France, and the late Province of Flanders." The deal between the two islands were shown in coarsened and garbled form in Don Shaw's recent BBC TV programme, which at least brought to "Thoughts" to the attention of a wide audience. That was good since the result, not surprisingly, the best, (here) was that the "patriots" were right. The pity is that a year ago the pamphlet was more often studied, to than read.

One of the better campaign books, *Eyewitness Falklands*, has the contrary merit that Robert Fox of the BBC does not try to tell the whole story but confines himself to what he saw himself. So, to a large extent, do the other two. Bishop of the *Observer* and author of *Witness to the Times*, the *Litersat* of their *The Winter War* is to see how the men for too young to have known national service, began to see the military life. Like others, they were struck first by the toughness, the discipline. "Many of the Tanks," says Para officers called their men with a mixture of affection and contempt, "enjoyed their image, its emotional, efficient killers, one step away from

Would account for what
At the attached report
There are not exactly
(Nor will the source of
One alone, as it might
Leave 'justness' aside;
One hardly looks for
So many having died
A degree of easement
Yet the circumstances
Do they possess a life

may suggest, for some
 'four doors to escape by'
 if those words escape you);
 be, to be caught by
 just ask, is it needful?
 universal love or luxury,
 of life; this way or that,
 'should not be impossible
 end considerations persist
 of their own? Please check.

D. J. Enright

Franks exonerates the Government of responsibility "for the Argentine Junta's decision to commit in the first place an unprovoked aggression." But Simon Jenkins has recently observed (in *The Spectator* of April 2), "It is to speak of unprovoked aggression by the Argentines." "Military aggression may be unjustified but it is not unprovoked." The Argentine Government was "provoked" by the intransigence of the British—both in the years must surely have been anyone who did not misunderstand the tensions between Government and Opposition in the Foreign Office and House of Commons, to have been negotiating a settlement with Stanley and

...that possible - would drive him there
from office with greater ignominy than he
as prime minister since Lord North, and
later, a decade after his Falkland
tragedy, the American war was lost. She
would have accepted a compromise if
one had been available and acceptable.

...which brings us to the Belgrano, and
to Tam Dalyell. He had if not a good
reason, then the most consistent of war
MP. From the first he was resolutely
against the military response, believing
anyway in the justice of the Argentine
claim. His tone of voice is humourless
and occasionally dotty ("It so happened
that the ship was heading for the
 Falkland Islands" was head boy of
 Tam Brooksbank's house at Eton, and
 he was known him since he was 17")

In any case, as Naal Ascherson, a reviewer sympathetic to Dalyell, has admitted, "the peace plan would probably have been wrecked in Buenos Aires anyway". As it was, the junta got Mrs Thatcher off another hook in mid-May when they failed to seize the final proposals offered by the British government, terms which as Mr Benn rightly said in his Commons speech of May 20 — a characteristic mixture of daftness and common sense — were

show up the humbug of successful British governments. The notion that "the wishes of the islanders shall be paramount" is nonsense, self-determination gone mad. It is not applied in other contexts. We do not say: the wishes of the people of Little Gidding shall be paramount - on the contrary, when it comes to driving a motorway through their pastures, the wishes of the villagers are unthinkingly ignored. Nor, to take an obvious example, do we say: the wishes of the people of the British Isles shall be paramount.

**Falkland Islands Review: Report of a
Committee of Privy Counsellors**
106pp, HMSO, £6.10.
0 10 187870 2

Those who supported the war asked what the consequences for England and the world would have been if Mr. Thatcher's government had given in to illegality, had appeased the aggressors and the world would have been faced with questions which of their nature cannot be answered. Those who opposed the war have their own questions, which will become more and more insistent with time. A brilliant and deterring analysis, which would always be stirring, fought no longer to a bleak and barren spot in the Magellanic ocean of which no usages could be made unless it were a place of exile for the hypocrites of paltriness." It would be good if the world were, in some measure a better place for last year's war; that is an imponderable. What seems more likely is that there will be people who will never yield, find themselves saying with Johnson, "May my country never be cursed with such another conquest."

PETER CALVERT
The Falklands Crisis: The Rights and the Wrongs
 183pp. Frances Pinter. £9.50.
 086187272 X

Memorandum

D. J. En

D. J. Enright



"Motor Torpedo Boat", Montague Dowson's romantic view of air and sea power in the 1930s, is one of the items included in the sale of British Impressionist and Post-Impressionist and Modern Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture to be held at Sotheby's New Bond Street galleries on Wednesday, May 25, at 11 am.

Intelligence minus brains

Stuart Sutherland

NEIL FRUDE

The Intimate Machine: Close Encounters with the new computers 190pp. Century Publishing. £9.95 (paperback, £4.95). 0 712 60070

ADRIAN BERRY

The Super-Intelligent Machine: An Electronic Odyssey 182pp. Cape. £7.95. 0 224 01967 8

In 1960 Herbert Simon, one of the founders of Artificial Intelligence (the study of how to make computers perform intelligent tasks) proclaimed that within a decade "computers would have the problem solving and information handling capacity of the human". Despite the impressive achievements of the subject since then, most workers in it have by now learned to be more cautious about its future. This caution is not reflected by writers of popular books on AI, of whom Neil Frude, a social psychologist, and Adrian Berry, a journalist, are not atypical. Both their books are misleading and Frude's is pernicious, so it is worth examining where they go wrong.

Their early chapters are rather similar, and provide an elementary and inadequate account of the development of computers and programming languages, as well as of some of the intelligent tasks that computers can perform. Although Frude is more detailed, neither he nor Berry explains how it is possible to develop high-level languages which the computer itself translates back into machine code or why such languages are necessary. In fact, it would be virtually impossible to write complex programs in machine code since the programmer would have to specify all the operations needed to execute any instruction that was not part of the machine language, for example, calculating the square root of a number or finding the head of a list of items, and he would have to manage for himself the allocation of storage space within the machine. Most human thinking depends on the invention of higher-level concepts and a high-level programming language provides the programmer both with a ready-made set of high-level operations that he can use without worrying about the details of how they are implemented, and with the opportunity to invent and name other such operations not already incorporated in the language. Without these facilities, writing a complex program would be an impossibly difficult task. Indeed, progress in Artificial Intelligence has largely depended on the provision of increasingly sophisticated programming languages, as well as of more efficient "editors" and "operating systems", neither of which are mentioned by Frude or by Berry.

Both authors go on to describe a number of seemingly intelligent programs, but neither gives the reader any insight into how they work nor do they consider their limitations in sufficient detail. Instead they cite examples of the output from different programs, often in the form of a dialogue between the user and the program. These examples almost invariably represent the program working at its best and can be very misleading. There are programs that simulate psychotherapy, that make what appear to be intelligent comments on an input story, that write stories of a sort, and that simulate paranoia. But none of these programs achieves anything remotely approaching human understanding, and most perform by a series of tricks. Thus, a psychotherapy program may pick out from an input sentence one of a limited number of key words and ask a question about it. For example, if the patient uses the phrase "my mother", the program may give the preset response "Did you like your mother?" None of the programs has powers of inference that resemble those of a person and all are limited to a narrow range of discourse. Moreover, both authors grossly exaggerate the likelihood of there being highly

intelligent programs in widespread use in the foreseeable future, and although they give no arguments to suggest they are right, it is worth examining why they are wrong.

Very few programs that exhibit even a simulacrum of understanding have in fact been written and each of them is confined to a very limited domain. It is striking that the most impressive program on understanding natural language was written twelve years ago. Although its understanding was restricted to the domain of a mini-world of blocks of different shapes, it has not yet been surpassed. No one has any idea how to incorporate into a program the knowledge of a four-year-old child or how to retrieve from such a huge data-base the knowledge needed for a particular task. Indeed, perhaps the main lesson to be drawn from work in Artificial Intelligence is that the human mind is even more intricate and hard to simulate than might have been supposed. The difficulty of providing a computer program with a wide range of general knowledge means that for many years to come the most useful programs will almost certainly be specialist programs known as "expert systems", which operate within what are, by human standards, very narrow domains, such as chess, medical diagnosis, the derivation of molecular structure from X-ray diffraction patterns, and other similarly restricted problems. Several programs of this type perform impressively and may indeed do better than people, particularly when all the factors bearing upon the solution to the problem are known and when a numerical weighting of the importance of each factor or combination of factors can be provided. This is hardly surprising since it has been known for a long time that people are poor at weighing and combining probabilities and that the clinician's intuitions are often less accurate than a diagnosis based on a statistical analysis of the most likely cause of the symptoms presented.

There is a second and perhaps more important reason for caution in predicting the future intelligence of computers. It is only possible to program a computer to execute a given task if we already have a rigorous and explicit understanding of that task and of possible mechanisms for executing it. It is obvious that at present we possess such an understanding for very

little of human intellectual activity. For example, we understand explicitly the steps by which a mathematical proof may be reached, and – for elementary mathematics – some of the mechanisms for providing the right steps if a computer (or person) is given a theorem and instructed to prove it. But we do not understand how a mathematician selects a new theorem to prove on the intuition that it is both plausible and worth proving (that is, its proof will have important consequences). If we cannot at present write programs to make computers cope with the purely formal discipline of mathematics, there seems little chance of writing ones that simulate or understand human emotion, since our own understanding of emotions is almost wholly intuitive and unformalized. Again, nobody could start writing a program whose linguistic abilities replicated those of a native speaker, for the simple reason that we have not yet elucidated even the syntactic rules that govern language, let alone its semantics.

In the latter parts of their books, the authors diverge. In *The Super-Intelligent Machine* Berry threatens his readers with machines that will defend themselves against attack, but he forgets that computers will only have goals that are programmed into them and that even people are unlikely to be so foolish as to program the goal of self-preservation at the expense of mankind. However, intelligent computers were, such a goal could only be incorporated by design, except in a science-fiction world where computers evolved by random mutation, with the fitness surviving.

In *The Intimate Machine*, Frude takes a different tack. His main thesis is that people will tend to treat computers more and more animistically. There has always been a tendency to treat inanimate objects as people, as witness the traditional attitude of yachtsmen to their boats. Frude argues that because it is possible to communicate (in a loose sense) with a computer, attitudes to computers are likely to be more animistic than towards most other objects. Improvements in the existing capacity of computers to perceive and utter speech will greatly enhance animism towards them, and such animism would be further strengthened if it became possible to provide computers with the sort of wide-

range intelligence that man has. Frude himself appears to think that it would be desirable to foster animism towards computers and he argues that manufacturers are likely to attempt to do so because it would make their machines more appealing. According to him animism in the classroom is already encouraged by adding faces and limbs to the machine. He suggests that doll makers will shortly be employed to disguise computers' metal shells and flashing lights, for which they will substitute a model of a face whose artificial muscles will move to simulate appropriate emotions. In order to "personalise" them further, machines will be given individual voices, and their own foibles and idiosyncrasies, including a sense of humour. Frude does have the grace to admit that it will be easier to get a machine to laugh than to make it laugh at a joke.

His remaining suggestions, though he seems serious enough, belong to the realm of science fiction. Each machine will have a unique personality provided by "a character program", it will be identifiable male or female (men in general interrupt in conversation more than women) and so on. He suggests that machines will soon be able to form an impression of their user's character and base their own behaviour on it. For the reasons advanced earlier, there is, in my opinion, no possibility that this kind of machine can be designed in the foreseeable future.

In his final chapter, Frude weighs the advantages and disadvantages of the existence of a large number of humanoid computers, blithely assuming that the problem of making these machines more intelligent will shortly be solved and that almost everyone will have his own personal and personalized computer. Some of the advantages, for example, easier access to information in medicine and other subjects, are already with us; others, like improved prostheses for the disabled and devices for the deaf to transform speech into words on a visual display, are not far away. But most of Frude's suggestions – such as the use of computers to bring solace to the lonely by their engaging chatter, to replace judges, or to act as salesmen or as "family therapists", keeping a watchful eye on discord and intervening in their wisdom to reduce it, not to mention their use in "leisure-counselling,

psychotherapeutic and religious roles – will not come to pass for a very long time, if ever. Such programs, apart from needing a formalized knowledge of human nature with which we cannot provide them, would require an enormous data-base, and as already indicated we do not know how to implement in a program knowledge over a wide variety of fields. Moreover, relying on advice from such programs is likely to be extremely dangerous. Existing large programs are constructed by several different programmers and they are often patched up in an ad hoc fashion to remove flaws. Not only do they rarely function perfectly, nobody fully understands them, least of all the user. In issuing advice, they are limited to the information with which they have been programmed and cannot take into account anything unforeseen. Since in any large area of human endeavour, such as warfare or business, it is impossible to foresee all contingencies, the program user must be wary of any advice the program gives, but many laymen have misplaced faith in computers that is matched only by their ignorance of them.

Although it is safe to disregard Frude's more far-fetched predictions, including his "machines programmed in the art of seduction and able to give complete satisfaction", he is right in thinking that some people already tend to treat computers as people and that this tendency may be further fostered by manufacturers. He tends to view this development with elation, but many will find it abhorrent. It seems to be debasing the emotions to ascribe love, hate or sympathy to an inanimate object, and although it is natural to care for and even respect human artefacts, the pretence of dressing up a computer as a person is obviously wrong to attribute consciousness to them, since consciousness is associated with the brain and there is no reason to suppose that it could ever be a property of silicon chips, regardless of the complexity of the computation they perform. Since computers will play an increasing part in everyone's life, it would be wise to remember that they are only machines, that they are not capable of affection or sympathy and that they are at least as fallible as people, though in different ways.

Postman advances his argument by flouting the basic rules of historical method. He refuses to pay any attention to distinctions of geographical context or social class. His assertions about the invention of childhood are concerned with Europe, whereas his claim that television is destroying childhood, he fails to see his general hypothesis against evidence drawn from other cultures, with the result that he establishes no necessary link between the ubiquity of television and the disappearance of childhood. He ignores the way in which concepts of childhood, varied with social mores, have changed over time. Instead, he fixes on a specific notion of childhood, popular only with the literate middle-classes in a particular period, and generalizes about it. Much of his evidence is couched in a persuasive, if not a convincing, manner. Of all the indications that childhood is disappearing, he says, "none is more suggestive than the fact that the history of childhood has now become a major industry among scholars", since historians are motivated by logic, the fashion for the past is to avoid learning about birth and not avoid learning about death. Even the respectable could contrive to witness adult sexuality, as any reader of Walter's *Secret Life* will know. The plain facts of demography show that, most children before the twentieth century would witness the death or serious illness of a parent, a sibling, or

a friend. Far from concealing the problem of death from their children, Victorian parents went to the opposite extreme, reeling them stories which dwelt on the death-bed and requiring them to take part in elaborate funeral rituals. Postman advances his argument by flouting the basic rules of historical method. He refuses to pay any attention to distinctions of geographical context or social class. His assertions about the invention of childhood are concerned with Europe, whereas his claim that television is destroying childhood, he fails to see his general hypothesis against evidence drawn from other cultures, with the result that he establishes no necessary link between the ubiquity of television and the disappearance of childhood. He ignores the way in which concepts of childhood, varied with social mores, have changed over time. Instead, he fixes on a specific notion of childhood, popular only with the literate middle-classes in a particular period, and generalizes about it. Much of his evidence is couched in a persuasive, if not a convincing, manner. Of all the indications that childhood is disappearing, he says, "none is more suggestive than the fact that the history of childhood has now become a major industry among scholars", since historians are motivated by logic, the fashion for the past is to avoid learning about birth and not avoid learning about death. Even the respectable could contrive to witness adult sexuality, as any reader of Walter's *Secret Life* will know. The plain facts of demography show that, most children before the twentieth century would witness the death or serious illness of a parent, a sibling, or

Difficult women

Alan Macfarlane

JOHN PUTNAM DEMOS

Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England 543pp. Oxford University Press. £17.50. 0 19 503131 8

Books about witchcraft, like witchcraft trials, come in waves. There is a lull in activity, then they burst forth. After one such lull in the second half of the 1970s, important books on witchcraft in Scotland by Christina Lerner, on Basque witchcraft by Gustav Henningsen, and now on New England witchcraft by John Putnam Demos have all recently appeared. Like younger siblings, too, they are the end result of long and complex processes. Demos tells us that "the book itself spans a good six years in the writing; the inquiry goes back two decades".

The aim of Demos's analysis is twofold. First, and above all, he wishes to make colonial New England come alive again: "I want readers to share my own experience of knowing the common folk and common life of a distant time." Finding that most methods of analysis meant that "the people were slipping through the scholarly cracks", he bases his book on what he calls "Biography". In theory only the first three chapters come under this heading, but in practice almost every chapter tells stories. As Demos explains, he started to write stories about particular individuals or trials, and these stories "grew out of the case studies". They are "truly the core" of the book. They rely on court records, particularly the vivid depositions or accusations by Puritan ministers, which are then fleshed out with elements of background, of context, and (at least occasionally) of overt interpretation.

These vignettes are fascinating. The biography of the witch Rachel Clinton, for example, allows us to see into the social world of a humble later seventeenth-century family. In this account, or in that of the male witch John Godfrey in the following chapter, as well as in the horrific possession of Elizabeth Knapp, or the mysterious events surrounding Caleb Powell, we receive the shock of surprise and immediacy which Le Roy Ladurie achieves in parts of *Montaigne*. As the author rightly claims, "For evident human interest, far richness of detail, for all they reveal about the intersection of character and culture", such materials are "unsurpassed among extant materials from the seventeenth century". The reconstruction of ordinary life and speech, and of the world of early American settlers, communities is very well done and makes much of the book a great pleasure to read. In his principal aim, therefore, Demos has succeeded.

A second aim clearly is to contribute to our understanding of why witchcraft occurred as it did, why particular individuals were accused and others were not, why belief in it rose and declined. While much of Demos's analysis is important, it is not quite so clear that major progress has been made here. This is not surprising given the fact that little of the material is new and much of it has been analysed very extensively before. Even though Demos has wisely concentrated on the less sensational materials, he has not, thus, helping to prevent us getting an impoverished, not to say distorted, view, he is still covering well-known territory. His analysis is conducted under the three bandages of "Psychology", "Sociology" and "History". Of these, "psychology" is far the least convincing.

Demos's basic psychological assumption is a welcome one; namely, that the seventeenth-century character is to be analysed as recognizably human in his emotional make-up. The trouble is that the evidence is hardly so "external", consisting of reports of behaviour and snatches of conversation that plausible analysis in this direction is impossible. Frequently this is done, as Demos recognizes, by writing, for instance, that as far as the "witches" are concerned, "the world was a family interaction, in which the family was applied to the wider world" (the data on the

families of particular victims are simply too thin.), or, in relation to the suggestion that victims fell ill psychosomatically as a result of fear and anxiety: "Any such diagnosis of this type would require close observation of the victim over an extended period of time; and it cannot be forced on admittedly fragmentary materials from centuries ago." Elsewhere he writes of the need to guess, because the "records" are devoid of developmental reference – hence the need to revert once again to procedures of inference." At best his guesses are suggestive; but frequently he makes fairly implausible suggestions based on almost no evidence, for example that John Godfrey the becher was a "latent homosexual" or that Elizabeth Knapp was traumatized by the loss of her parents' love when a younger sibling was born, and by her father's promiscuous life, so that finally she had to rely on the clergyman, Willard, "she needed his regularly available presence to maintain the integrity of her all-too-fragile self".

Demos has a tendency to fire off a series of intriguing questions and then, lamely to admit that there is no evidence so we will never know the answers to them: "Was there also some veiled complicity – such as one often finds in habitual victims? The question must be asked, even though the records will not support an answer." This stretches the reader's patience, as does the catchy style: "Elizabeth in her fits had become a corporeal bomb, observed in the process of exploding", which sometimes degenerates into titillation: "Every culture has its whirlpools of callousness, of cruelty, 'I' fail to see also how talk of affects and defenses, of anxiety and animality, of narcissism and projection really helps. It takes us away from the individuals and their context into obscure and ultimately unsatisfactory abstract speculations which do not help us, but save any of the central questions about witchcraft."

Fortunately, Demos's sociological approach is much more successful than the psychological. Through a combination of trial and local records, he is able to draw many conclusions about the 234 "cases" of witchcraft which are recorded for New England: for example, that the "typical witch" was female, middle-aged, of English background, married but with few children, often involved in conflict with other family members, often accused of other offences, of relatively low social position, abrasive, contentious and stubborn. In a series of community studies, we are shown the neighbourhood and spatial links between accuser and accused. A number of the negative findings are as important as the

positive ones. There was practically no sign of the active "cunning folk" or white witches who played such an important part in Old England, though in other respects most of the details of the cases are very similar to what was found in the English counties from which the settlers had come. We are told that "there is little sign of generalized (or structural) conflict between the sexes" since many of the evidence that wider family relationships were important: "accusations of witchcraft almost never followed blood-lines... there are no grounds here for associating witchcraft with 'rotted' and 'structural' – tensions in the lives of families or kin". It is the personal element, the character of the principal actors, and particularly the fact that much of the tension and concern centre round "menopausal women", which is most noticeable, and a combination of sex, ageing and often a deteriorating social position which led to grating fears and eventual accusation of witchcraft.

In the final section, entitled "History", the emphasis changes from cross-sectional analysis to the history of whole communities. Thus, we are given a village study over four decades of Wethersfield and Hampton, whose story is carried on through oral memories for the eighteenth century. These community biographies provide a vivid insight into New England life, focused on a series of tragic events. They lead Demos to advance certain hypotheses, though, as he admits, "generalization based on two cases is hazardous". He tries to link together "signs" (thots, natural disasters, such as epidemics or harvest failures), "signs" (comets, eclipses, etc) and "controversies" (internal and external disputes or wars which he believes that he sees a pattern where witchcraft tensions flourished alongside "signs" and "harm", but abated when the whole community was involved in a major dispute of a religious or political nature. This is an intriguing suggestion but not totally convincing and even Demos is forced to admit that the "pattern is rough and incomplete along several of its edges, and its inner meaning is far from clear". But what he certainly has shown is that "Witchcraft was no meandering sideshow, isolated from the larger history of early New England. On the contrary, it belonged to – and in that history virtually from beginning to end."

Despite its repetitions, its occasional verbosity, and the fact that to practice Demos's divisions between his four separate approaches are dispensed with, this is an interesting, thought-provoking and readable book.

Climbing cloudwards

Imre Salusinszky

HYATT H. WAGGONER

American Visionary Poetry 226pp. Louisiana State University Press. £8.75. 0 8171 1051 5

"Vision" has fallen on hard times, thanks to its over-use as a term of general approbation. Hyatt H. Waggoner's suggestion is that we revise "vision" by reconceiving it to "the act of seeing", itself reconstituted as a result of "experimentation" in the "vision laboratories". This experimentation has rejected any mechanical or photographic explanation of perception, insisting that even "literal" sight involves interpretation, symbolization and discovery.

To qualify as "visionary" in Waggoner's sense, poetic meaning or value must be grounded in a perceived scene or object. The careers of many of the poets discussed (they are Whitman, Crane, Williams, Roethlis, A. R. Ammons and David Wagoner) are traced as metaphorical climbs (but not falls) from safe perceptual ground into "Cloud-cuckoo-land". Whitman's poetry began to "diminish in imaginative power" as soon as the "perceived world" ceased to lead

directly to "visions of the completion of what was potential" in the seed. Ammons's poetry became "self-pitying, self-indulgent, and boring" when he turned away from "the laws of the microscopic and macroscopic physical and temporal world".

The general conclusions drawn from this study seem "conventional", if not diluted, Romantic. Visionary poetry is "at once subjective and objective", leading to an identity between perceiver and perceived, and "can enrich our lives, making them seem more meaningful". But the submerged anti-Romantic polemic in the book is suggested by the repeated denigration of Stevens, portrayed as a solipsist turning his back on unpleasant realities. Stevens is here related to Blake, and in the same sense of a visionary poet than Williams, who is related to Wordsworth.

Stevens, though, was not an Idealist, believing (as Waggoner notes) that "the greatest poverty is not to live in a physical world". Blake, too, insists upon grounding vision in "material particulars", and affirms that "the eye sees more than the heart knows". Blake's definition of visionary poetry as "an endeavor to restore what the ancients called the golden age, whatever it may now mean, will probably continue to mean more to poets and critics than anything discovered in optics."

Rise of the planters

Betty Wood

GLORIA L. MAIN

Tobacco Colony: Life in Early Maryland, 1650-1720 326pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £24.30. 0 691 04693 X

During the half century or so after 1680 the Tidewater Chesapeake underwent a remarkable transformation, and one which exerted a profound influence, in both the short and the longer term, on all aspects of life in that region. Put very baldly, the Tidewater was transformed from a slave-holding to a slave society.

By the 1670s tobacco was firmly established as the Chesapeake's major export crop, but what had always been a volatile tobacco economy was in deep recession. Although blacks had been present in the region since 1619 they still accounted for only a small fraction of the population and were in no sense essential, or deemed to be essential, for the successful functioning of the Tidewater economy. Most blacks served for life, but as yet they had not been debased as a matter of public policy to the legal status of chattel slaves.

The albeit temporary unfreedom of so many of the Chesapeake's white inhabitants was far more striking than either the size or the economic significance of the black element. The tobacco economy depended, as it had since the 1620s, upon the recruitment in Britain of men and women who were prepared to work for a fixed, and often arduous, term in exchange for their passage to America. As remarkable as this heavy dependence upon indentured servants was a chronic social and political instability which found its most overt expression in Bacon's Rebellion, and which, much to the consternation of local elites, sometimes involved blacks and whites acting in concert.

By the 1720s the situation could not have been more different. After about 1713 tobacco prices, and thereby the overall economic health of the Chesapeake, had shown a marked improvement. The labour base of the tobacco economy had shifted from voluntary white to involuntary black servitude and in both Virginia and Maryland the essential conditions of chattel slavery had become enshrined in public law. But this was not the sum total of the Chesapeake's transformation. Now the region was characterized by an impressive degree of social and political stability. A clearly defined planter elite enjoyed a virtually unchallenged hold on the reins of power. All whites, regardless of whether they held slaves, had been persuaded that they had little in common with, and much to fear from, the Tidewater's blacks. An ill-defined racial prejudice had given way to an explicit and pervasive racism.

The highly complex relationship between tobacco, black oppression, and white freedom has always fascinated colonial historians; and as Gloria L. Main's *Tobacco Colony* deals with several themes that have been well ventilated in recent years. Even so, her book adds to our knowledge of early Maryland and for that reason is to be applauded. However, *Tobacco Colony* is not without its defects.

Although there are some notable exceptions – E. S. Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom* (1975) springs immediately to mind – much of the research on the early Chesapeake has been relatively narrow in its scope. This is not to denigrate the value of this work because such detailed and technically sophisticated studies were long overdue. Yet it is greatly to Professor Main's credit that she has tried to fit together the pieces of the jigsaw into a more comprehensive picture of early Maryland. But unfortunately an over-dependence upon quantitative techniques has resulted in an irritatingly incomplete analysis.

Professor Main begins by outlining Maryland's demographic and economic development after 1650 (she has

little to say about the first twenty years of the colony's history) and closely follows Paul Clemen's in emphasizing the responsiveness of the Tidewater to the vagaries of the North Atlantic economy. As she goes on to argue, what had always been a "boom and bust" tobacco economy effectively shaped both the accumulation and distribution of wealth in Maryland and, by the late seventeenth century, the decision of those who could afford it to switch from white servants to more profitable black slaves.

Gloria Main explores this transition in her third chapter, and in a discussion which provides some useful information, but which does not add much that is new by way of argument, she allies herself with those who have argued that the dramatic change in the Tidewater's labour base had far more to do with changed economic and demographic circumstances than it did with racial attitudes.

Having ascertained the manner in which wealth was generated and distributed (and the picture she paints of an increasingly unequal society is entirely convincing) Main goes on to consider the material conditions of life in early Maryland. It is here that one takes issue with her: not because of what she says but because of what she chooses to ignore.

In recent years we have witnessed a methodological revolution in early American history. Hitherto unknown or neglected records – wills, inventories, and the like – have been sought out and subjected to statistical analysis of a type unthought of by previous generations of scholars. Such an approach has often resulted in the colonial experience being presented in the most mechanistic terms, as a world which can be explained by graphs and equations. Such a methodology, which Main tends to favour, is one which many historians find at best unconvincing and at worst incomprehensible.

Basing her discussion upon a rigorous examination of a wide range of source materials, but especially probate records, Main outlines the material comforts enjoyed by Marylanders. Servants and slaves, "Poorer Planters" and "Middle and Affluent Planters", but somewhat surprisingly perhaps, not women are all considered separately. What emerges is a fascinating account of the diet, housing, clothing and so on of each of these groups. Main could scarcely have wrong more from the records. But as is so often the case, correlations have to be made. Many of those established here are both valid and credible, but others leave one bemused by the extremes to which quantification can be taken. For example, what are we supposed to make of the comment that although "there appears to be some relationship between relative affluence, books, and chamber pots... A man was equally unlikely to own a chamber pot if he possessed 220 or ten times as much, had a Bible or did not have a Bible" (page 246)?

Professor Main's interpretation attaches insufficient weight to ideas about religion. For Maryland is one, to which religion and ideology play a secondary role to impersonal economic and demographic forces. One is left with only a vague impression of how the groups discussed actually perceived their situation and prospects within an increasingly unequal and racially divided society. Main concedes that she has "dwelled at length on the economic and demographic consequences of tobacco culture and said rather little about the meaning of living with those consequences" and rests her defence on the quite amazing proposition that "This is the most elusive of subjects and one better suited to the arts of the novelist than to the skills of the historian". This, fortunately, is not an opinion shared by all economic and social historians.

Tobacco Colony provides an excellent discussion of the material conditions of life in early Maryland and for that reason ranks as an important contribution which demands the close attention of colonial historians. However, we still await a fully rounded account of life in that colony during the critical half-century after 1680.

Perversions of power

J. L. Houlden

GRAHAM SHAW

The Cost of Authority: Manipulation and Freedom in the New Testament
292pp. SCM. £9.50.
0 334 01953 2

The tresome negative features of Graham Shaw's book are so obtrusive that some readers will, to their loss, give up in irritation. The fundamental difficulty is deciding how to place it. Is it a learned work? Hard to say: no index, no footnotes, ineptitudes through working with an English version of the New Testament rather than the Greek text, and decisive judgments on the meaning of passages where in fact there is uncertainty. Yet also much close and perceptive exposition of the letters of Paul and the Gospel of Mark, and scholarship veiled for the sake of clear adherence to the theme. Or is it, despite its length and the space devoted to exegesis, really a tract? Certainly, it calls strenuously for a revision of attitudes and, less clearly, for action; and it has the relentless one-sidedness of a work whose message comes first. At root it is the *crêpe de mort* of a pastor and priest who sees certain ill with startling clarity and can abide them no longer. His pain has given him eloquence. It has also, as pain will, given a peculiarly private vision which will seem to others, in this way or that, distorted.

Though reflection is wide-ranging and this epistle has many wild beasts to fight, his thesis may be simply stated. The Christian gospel aims to create freedom and reconciliation by the persistent and uncompromising exercise of mutual forgiveness. These are the supreme values and Jesus is taken to have promoted them. They (and not doctrines or religious institutions) are the real stuff of the Christian religion and constitute the only salvation worth having. Yet no sooner was this gospel announced in his teaching and death than it was distorted by the insidious and pluriform intrusion of human authority. The letters of Paul display this perversion in operation on every page, as he flatters, cajoles, bludgeons and blackmails his subject Christians into acceptance of his will. He all but stifled the liberating grace of which, at the deepest level of his authenticity, he was nevertheless the messenger.

In the next oldest Christian document, the Gospel of Mark, some of the same forces can be discerned;

though with much less prominence. Whether it is Jesus himself, or Jesus as presented by Mark, the Gospel as we have it sounds the genuine note with considerable clarity.

From that inauspicious beginning, the exercise of authority, by bishop, priest, pope and synod, has been the bane of the Church's existence, and the sooner Christians do away with it, the better. Retaining it, they smother the precious truth they stand for and promote the false values of subservience and intolerance. They suppress dissent and claim divine sanction for the all too human power they wield.

As so often happens, to state the thesis baldly is to make it seem blithely naive; and there is indeed in this book a sustained freshness of discovery that mithnessness and inadequacy abound and have abounded among the godly. These things are sincerely new. And some old familiar ghosts return once more to haunt these pages: that Paul perverted a wonderful pristine gospel, that Jesus stood for liberal values, that Christianity would be fine if it were not for the Church and that dogma can only falsify the truth about God. It may seem hardly worth saying all over again.

And yet, with all its faults, this book has an austerity and a purity which give it power. Much of its analysis of the absurd preoccupation of Christians with alien values, many of them relating to power and authority, is done with skill and it hits home; especially where it relates to that which is obsolete and avoidable, yet wilfully retained. But the nagging annoyance remains, and perhaps its deepest source is that what we in fact have been given is two distinct books, neither of which quite manages to be itself. One is a tract on Christian freedom. To serve that end effectively, it needed to take those Christians, clerical and lay, who share the author's concern, what steps they are to take to follow his recipe for Christian life, within the practicalities of our existence. As it stands, it has little to say to those who, regretting authoritarian tendencies in the Church, nevertheless see the need for order and feel there is a legitimate kind of authority without which the word of God will almost certainly go by default. The longing look to the example of the Quakers (another familiar ghost) is revealing and the honest only too obvious: can the Church ever be anything like a mass movement or one that embraces a wide social range on

the unstructured terms here laid down? And does not the place of authority in human relations deserve a more subtle and sympathetic treatment than it receives here?

The other book that is not quite present is a study of authority and freedom in earliest Christianity. One may agree with the author's dislike of the excessive technicality and the abstruseness of much New Testament scholarship, but it does at least make it possible to bring historical imagination to bear upon the documents and the life they represent. In so doing it fosters a sympathy which is both a scholarly and, one would suppose, a Christian virtue. This book is harshly lacking in that quality where Paul is concerned, and it is anachronistic when it comes to Jesus, whose aspirations may not have coincided so perfectly with those of his good, modern, liberal-minded followers. Eschatology, for example, cries aloud for a hearing. A sense of history and of development in Christianity do not figure much in these pages, sensitive as they are to the flow of the text and to many of its deeper connections.

The effect of the fusion of the two potential books is that the study of the texts leads too easily to moral judgment upon them - even, sometimes, at the cost of sheer distortion of their sense. Thus, whatever may lie behind Paul's treatment of resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15, his belief on the subject is not wholly or chiefly explained by his being reprehensibly determined to assert his apostolic authority. His main concern is to correct what he considers a false view of resurrection, albeit in a spirit of some agitation about his credibility.

The two potential books are made one in the hope of providing "a new approach to scripture", which avoids the sterility of much conventional scholarship. The aspiration, if ambitious, is admirable in itself, and there is much that is attractive in the starting-point for the alleged new approach: simply to take the scriptural texts as, on their historical performance, works of "immense power". The power shows itself for Shaw in their capacity to testify to and to create the freedom and reconciliation which he sees as the heart of the Gospel. On his own showing, of course, that is not all that they testify to, and in effect Shaw (as he is entitled to do) takes what moves him. But precisely here there is a certain lack of that austerity which in other respects marks this work so strongly: for the New Testament writings have their own historical integrity and the discipline of hearing their voices is here bypassed somewhat cavalierly in the interests of an assumption of what needs, somehow, to be there. It is hard to do justice to such compelling truth so elegantly yet waywardly expressed.

Rival rhetorics

Brian Martin

ELISABETH JAY (Editor)

The Evangelical and Oxford Movements
219pp. Cambridge University Press.
£18.50 (paperback, £6.95).
0 521 24403 X

There is an uncertainty of aim about this book. According to its publishers' prescription it should be a selection of English prose writings of Evangelical and Oxford Movement authors. It excludes, however, examples of handbill literature and popular religious tracts of the day. (How were they written? What stylistic means did they use to make their mark?) Conversely, Elisabeth Jay inappropriately includes two brief extracts (in someone else's translation) of John Keble's Latin text of his *Prolegomena Academicæ*. The *Prolegomena*, or Oxford Lectures on Poetry, are not English prose.

Dr Jay's comments on prose style are spare. She does show that John Henry Newman in *The Tarnworth Reading Room* crushed his opponent, Sir Robert Peel, "with the weight of accumulated parallel clauses" and slew him "with an epigram". Yet this sort of analysis is hard to find in her commentary, and often when it does occur it is rudimentary. Thus, she informs that Francis Close, the famous vicar of Cheltenham and Dean of Ripon, wrote sermons, lectures and books which were thin on ideas but which showed "and" as his favourite conjunction, and the dash as his most characteristic stylistic device: not really much help. It is surprising that she ignores the major influence of the great classical authors on the English style of the writers represented in this book. All these clerics were well read in the classics, especially the Oxford Movement men, Keble, Newman and Pusey, who were able to write fluently in Latin, and utilized its constructions and rhetoric in English.

Unsatisfactory in these respects as a literary critic, Dr Jay is better where church history is concerned. The extracts from the religious controversialists are well chosen and show the conflict in belief between the Evangelicals and the Tractarians. They are valuable for students since most of the texts are inaccessible in any convenient form. The book furnishes, for instance, easily manageable examples of Francis Close on church architecture, William Goode on the divine rule of faith and practice, Newman's booklet *The Tarnworth Reading Room* and Pusey on the Holy Eucharist. Charles Simeon, though more accessible elsewhere, is also well represented; Dr Jay notes rightly his restrained and urbane style. He was a learned man who sought to persuade

gently by reason and precept: "The godly ought to be very cautious of giving the ungodly an opportunity of blaming them deservedly." His introductory essay, and the headnote to each of the divines, are written cogently and concisely; along with Newman she admires clarity of style.

On a particularly complicated point of religious and literary history, she is stimulating, and provokes arguments and invites questions. The first sentence of her introductory essay states: "Mid-nineteenth-century England thought of itself as a religious society." Yet did it? The middle class might have done so, but did the working class - the average agricultural labourer or factory worker? The contention is highly debatable. As no doubt Newman's defection to Rome unsettled many a waverer in the Church of England, but Keble and Pusey remained staunch; their loyalty held fast the majority inspired by the early years of the Oxford Movement.

Nor does Dr Jay stress enough the *Tracts for the Times* were written in the first place for the clergy - an "appeal to the clergy", even if some were presented to Pusey's theological society - and only secondarily to congregations. In Keble's case, there is much evidence in his writings of debt to Wordsworth, little of that to Coleridge. It is curious indeed to maintain that Keble's use of the word "fancy" in his tract *On the Mystical attributed to the Early Fathers of the Church* owed anything to Coleridge. Perhaps, too, she should have noted that Matthew Arnold's enthusiasm for Newman's sermon delivery at St Mary's, Oxford, is particularly partial: others were not impressed by rather monotonous voice and long pauses. Then, on the subject of Tractarian poetic diction, another expression found its source in eighteenth-century poetry. It is partly used in the belief that poetry "the handmaid of religion" must have its own peculiar vocabulary and that the initiated could understand the doctrine of reserve, expounded by Isaac Williams in *Tract 71*, as applicable to poetry as well as religion.

It is unfortunate that the pattern of the series to which this book belongs induces an identity crisis. Dr Jay. Never quite sure whether to be a literary critic or a historian, she succeeded ultimately as a historian. It is that she sets too much store by Thomas Mozley's *Reminiscences of Oriel College and the Oxford Movement*. Newman in old age, was he not a little grumpy, critical of his brother-in-law's book as too "emulous but inaccurate. But then, Jay might say, in that age of *Tract* might religion perty struggle with belief Newman? After all, Dr Close is supposed to have said that he would not "trust the author of the XC with his purse".

Anthony Burgess's novel about the Abbey, and since Gide's essay in *The Vatican Cellars*, is included. The space should have been found for Zola's classic *Rome*; there is no account of the mood of Rome in the Vatican in the last years of Leo XIII.

Some works were published too late for inclusion. Thus the late Archbishop Hyginus Eugene Cardinalis's *On the Knights of Cross and the Knights of Gerosards*, *Avant Dure* (Gerard's *Crosses* and *Avant Dure*) completes the account of papal sketches out to George Bernard Shaw in *The Vatican*. "The completion of the bibliography," writes Michael Walsh, "has been an unusually interesting and informative undertaking." One who was what he means: his own book is a "discovering" of the old (Grosvenor), dismissing the new (Malachi Martin) and defining the pompous (pompous) communication to the user. There is no bibliography of the Vatican quite like it. It is a comparison.

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RUSSIA

Through chaos to utopia

Leonard Schapiro

ARTHUR P. MENDEL

Michael Bakunin: Roots of Anarchy
517pp. Eastbourne: Holt-Saunders.
£24.25.
0 03 039218 6

ALLEN KELLY

Michael Bakunin: A Study in the Psychology and Politics of Utopianism
320pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
£17.50.
0 19 827244 8

It was to be expected that the spate of material on Bakunin which has been made available in recent years should tempt further biographers. That indefatigable scholar, Arthur Leitch, has laboured hard to edit and publish the rich store of Bakunin documents which was acquired in 1936 by the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. This came mainly from the library of Max Nettlau, a scholar of independent means who devoted his life to the study of anarchism. He died in 1944, at the age of seventy-nine. He was the author, among many other writings, of a monumental biography in German of Bakunin, in three volumes, comprising over twelve hundred pages. Each page was written by him on wax paper and duplicated on an "auto-copier", and the forty copies so produced were sent to friends and major libraries, including the British Museum. After the reopening of the Institute, which the Germans had closed down in 1940, publication of Bakunin's was embarked on, and several volumes of *Archives Bakounine* have appeared since 1961.

Arthur P. Mendel started to write his book because he felt that E. H. Carr's biography did not sufficiently appreciate Bakunin's contribution to freedom: he finished the book convinced that no biographer of the anarchist ideal could adequately realize the threat which he posed to freedom, or the fact that along with passionate ranting about unlimited liberty, Bakunin, whether aware of the contradiction or not, was at the same time propounding "rigid authoritarianism". Actually, Carr, in his mastery biography, was alive to Bakunin's inconsistency. In Bakunin's outlook, "Bakunin" is written, "is known to the world as one of the founders of anarchism. It is less often remembered that he was the first originator of the conception of a select and closely organized revolutionary party, bound together not only by common ideas, but by the tie of implicit obedience to an absolute revolutionary dictator." But Mendel's main concern is to search for the roots of the crying inconsistency. In Bakunin's political theories in the character of the man whose "anarchist" Bakunin freedom was horn out of the heroic strength and courage it seems to reflect, but rather of weakness, fear and flight. We are accordingly invited, throughout the book, at all stages of Bakunin's troubled life, to pray for aid and psychoanalytical explanations; such as narcissism and the "Oedipus link" with his mother. The case which Mendel makes seems convincing - so valid can be judged, if at all, only by specialists in psychoanalysis - in so far as this method is capable of being applied to subjects long dead.

The negative sides of Bakunin are well known. He seems to have lived his life in a dream world of his own making, like an overgrown child, incapable of facing reality. He was tyrannical in his behaviour, intolerant and meddlesome, with no sense of social responsibility. He berated his co-workers for their matter of factness, or for their matter of factness of psychology. It is the charge of dishonesty by which Marx accused his expulsion from the International in 1872 was untrue. But there are enough discreditable episodes in Bakunin's career which are genuine.

Yet by itself, this catalogue gives an incomplete picture of the man, because it leaves out of account his extraordinary power of charming and fascinating, if only for a time, those with whom he came in contact. He would also act nobly on occasion. In Dresden, in 1849, after the failure of the attempted insurrection, he could easily have escaped. But, as he wrote later, "I could not bring myself to desert poor Heubner", a fellow insurgent who would not abandon his post even when all was already lost. This cost Bakunin over ten years of prison and exile.

Bakunin's career which have given rise to much speculation. One is the long Confession which he wrote while in the Peter and Paul Fortress in 1851, after being requested by Nicholas I to do so. Max Nettlau regarded it as an act of subtle deception, which is the view accepted by the Bakunin mythologizers. Professor Mendel, who devotes a good deal of discussion to this controversial document, seems to come to the same conclusion as Carr - that it was a voluntary act, and was in the main an accurate



William Corrick took these portraits of a glazier, peasants having tea and an old woman in St Petersburg of the early 1860s. Morvyn Lyons in Russia in Original Photographs 1860-1920 (212pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £6.95. 0 7100 9243 1) includes several Corrick "types" and many other remarkable photographs which show the great variety of peoples in Imperial Russia and the striking contrasts of the lives of the nobility and the peasantry in a society about to be overturned by revolution. The book ends with a number of photographs of post-revolutionary Russia.

He was a most powerful orator, in spite of the barrier of having to use languages foreign to him. He exercised an enormous influence over would-be intellectual revolutionaries, romantic like himself, intoxicated by the appeals to violence and destruction, and little concerned with the improbability and the patent inconsistency of the promised Utopia.

Both his latest biographers, Arthur Mendel and Allen Kelly, are fully aware of the discreditable aspects of Bakunin's career, and devote much space to them. Both, like Carr before them, agree that his theoretical writings are riddled with inconsistencies, interesting for psychological reasons only. But where Professor Mendel calls Freud in aid, Dr Kelly is concerned with "utopian psychology". The passage of time has probably put Bakunin in perspective: the riddles in his career have been solved, so far as the facts are concerned. His theoretical writings tend mostly to appeal to those who are emotionally drawn to them, rather than to those who are intellectually converted. He has thus become a subject for the psychologist, rather than the political philosopher - or perhaps, the political philosopher must, like the two authors with whom I am concerned, turn psychologist in order to interpret this extraordinary man.

But the mythology which surrounds Bakunin's life, and which was first circulated by his early admirers, is not dead. Thus, Kelly takes Leitch to task for reasserting, in his "extensive introductions and commentaries to the volumes relating to Bakunin's activities in the International, Bakunin's inventions" enshrining them as the one true version of the events, and omitting "the evidence which, subsequently discredited the denials of Bakunin and his henchmen". Her indictment of Leitch for selective and misleading use of Bakunin's correspondence to bolster Bakunin's version of his relations with Marx seems convincingly established on the basis of letters quoted by her from the volumes of the *Archives Bakounine* concerned. Since the facts relating to Bakunin's secret Alliance are too well established to be seriously disputed, Kelly attributes to Leitch "the genuinely Bakuninist faith that it is possible by an effort of will to transform reality into what one would wish it to be".

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it is the most illuminating treatment of the question to date. The letter of June 2, incidentally, revealed (as first pointed out by Confino) that Bakunin was not, as was generally supposed, the author of the notorious *Catechism of a Revolutionary*, made public at the trial of Nechaev after he was extradited for the murder of Ivanov. But Kelly seems to be right in arguing that Bakunin could well have had a hand in, or an influence on, it. She also argues most convincingly that the cause of the breach could not have been Bakunin's revision against Nechaev's methods - indeed, as she shows, letters written by him after the break of June 2, 1870, comparing Nechaev to Bellinsky, or justifying the murder of Ivanov, disprove this. She attributes the rupture with Nechaev to the realization that his own "pursuit of the millennium" in politics called for Nechaev's means, but that he, Bakunin, lacked the strength and resolution to employ them - "a Rudin, impatiently yearning to embody his ideal of unreflecting action". This is, by the way, not too far removed from Professor Mendel's contention that the due to Bakunin is to be sought in his weakness.

Dr Kelly owes much of her interpretation to Turgenev's *Rudin*. There is one aspect of Bakunin's writings which has perhaps not received the attention it deserves: the accuracy of his forecast of the course of the revolution in Russia, even if he was nearly half a century out in his timetable. He believed that revolution was more likely in a backward country like Russia, and that the peasants would play the decisive role in bringing it about. (It was indeed a peasant army which decided the issue in Petrograd on February 27, 1917, and again a peasant army which helped Lenin to power eight months later.) The method of revolution, according to Bakunin, was to be total anarchy. But the chaos must be controlled and guided by a secret, all-powerful elite, operating within it. All this, along with constant denunciations of "Jacobine" and of all organs of authority. And lastly, Bakunin's vision of Russia, liberated from Tsardom and enjoying the happiness of freedom, heading a commonwealth of Slav states, likewise freed from Austrian or Turkish tyranny, has become, in caricature, the Soviet bloc.

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On June 2, 1870, Bakunin wrote a long letter to Nechaev (it runs to over thirty printed pages in Volume IV of *Archives*), breaking off relations with him. Bakunin's motives for this have been much discussed. Leitch attributes the break to ideological disagreement. Mendel thinks it was due to injured vanity because Nechaev had treated him with contempt, by using methods against him that were only justifiable against political enemies. Kelly devotes a long chapter to a discussion of the subject.



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Personal effects

John W. Bowker

C. DANIEL BATSON and W. LARRY VENTIS

The Religious Experience: A Social Psychological Perspective
356pp. Oxford University Press.
£18.50 (paperback, £9.95).
0 19 503030 2

The Religious Experience is an ambitious title to give to a book: the definite article, where others have discerned multiplicity and distinction, in a very wide range of internal and external behaviour. In ambitious, in fact this book has a more modest goal: it is offered as "a step toward the social psychology of religion", a context in which "the religious experience" refers to "the effect of religion on the life of the individual". The emphasis of the book is on the "distribution" and "facilitation" of experiences within the scope of C. Daniel Batson and W. Larry Ventis's definition of religion as "whatever we as individuals do to come to grips personally with the questions that confront us because we are aware that we and others like us are alive and that we will die".

Having adopted this self-limiting definition, Batson and Ventis further circumscribe themselves with an extremely deficient interpretation of phenomenology, which they then contrast with empiricism. To have observed the necessary connection

between the two would, ironically, have reinforced the next stage of their argument, which is to treat cautiously claims that individual religion is determined solely by social influence. This is partially true, but equally important are the individual re-constructions and re-creation of the world. These happen in different ways, however; and the authors propose a "three-dimensional analysis of being religious", with distinguishing emphasis on end-orientation, quest-orientation and means-orientation.

In the second half of the book, Batson and Ventis attempt a comparative analysis of religion: personal freedom or bondage? Mental health or sickness? "Brotherly love" or self-concern? They end by asking whether religion "is on our side" and conclude that, on an extrinsic, means-orientation, religion is probably (usually) "against" us, but that end-orientation and quest-orientation "are on the side of at least some of us, some of the time".

There is much in this book that is naive and rudimentary - for example, its discussion of reductionism, its failure to recognize that religious experiences of all are equally important, or to give to the neoplatonic illustrations of the varieties of religious experience their own social context. Yet, for all these obvious criticisms, this is an important book. It pulls together diverse work and provides an elementary framework within which the study of the experiences of being religious can be undertaken. It is, as the authors say, only a step, but it is a useful step to have taken.

Papal pages

Peter Hebblethwaite

MICHAEL J. WALSH

Vatican City State
107pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £15.00.
0 90430 72 0

This specialized bibliography deserves note because of the unusual nature of its subject and the very comments of the "compiler" on the 368 items in many languages he has listed. Part of a series which will eventually cover the entire world, this volume on the Vatican was included for completeness' sake. But it is an anomaly, and some of the categories used in the series, such as "Town Planning", hardly apply, says Michael Walsh, "in a country with only two buildings of any size - one a palace and the other a church". A glance at his map shows that this is not altogether true: there is more than one palace, and a cluster of offices, museums, workshops, printing presses, barracks, bookshops, a cinema and a supermarket can be found in the bottom right-hand corner. But this point is a fair one. The Vatican City State is different.

The section headed "Literature" might have included a mention of Giuseppe Gioacchino Belli, the Roman dialect poet who worked for the Vatican as a censor, or at least

The difficulty about a bibliography is always to set its limits. In the case of the Vatican, this difficulty is increased because it lived in symbols with Rome for so long that in talking about the city one is already talking about the Vatican. So H. V. Morton's splendid book, *The Foundations of Rome*, should have been included; not only because water has been a perennial problem since ancient Roman times but because the fountains, liquid music, are one of the city's chief glories. They are part of Rome's papal inheritance. Moreover, the Vatican and the city have continued to interact even since the collapse of the Papal States in 1870 left the pope, in his own eyes at least, "the prisoner of the Vatican". Mussolini's "new Rome" was an attempt to steal the Vatican's thunder for the city. The mass pilgrimages of today are proof that it failed. Giulio Andreotti remarked that when, as Foreign Minister, he visited foreign capitals, his hosts usually could not remember the name of his prime minister and wanted instead to talk about the pope.

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Anthony Burgess's novel about the Abbey, and since Gide's essay in *The Vatican Cellars*, is included. The space should have been found for Zola's classic *Rome*; there is no account of the mood of Rome in the Vatican in the last years of Leo XIII. Some works were published too late for inclusion. Thus the late Archbishop Hyginus Eugene Cardinalis's *On the Knights of Cross and the Knights of Gerosards*, *Avant Dure* (Gerard's *Crosses* and *Avant Dure*) completes the account of papal sketches out to George Bernard Shaw in *The Vatican*. "The completion of the bibliography," writes Michael Walsh, "has been an unusually interesting and informative undertaking." One who was what he means: his own book is a "discovering" of the old (Grosvenor), dismissing the new (Malachi Martin) and defining the pompous (pompous) communication to the user. There is no bibliography of the Vatican quite like it. It is a comparison.

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Struggling on the edge

A. J. Krailsheimer

LEO SPITZER

Essays on Seventeenth-century French Literature
Edited and translated by David Bellos
336pp. Cambridge University Press.
£27.50
0 521 24356 4

In an ideal world, no doubt, study of theology would bring its adepts closer to God, of economics to wealth and of literary criticism to the truth and beauty contained in literature. As things are, the only indisputable consequence of these studies is self-perpetuation. At its best literary criticism is a secondary, though helpful, activity, at its worst a parasitic growth on literature. The history of criticism is a perfectly legitimate academic subject, part of the history of ideas and art, the fortunes of a given author or work may be as relevant as its genesis to a reader's fuller understanding. None the less, publication of six critical articles, four of which go back between forty-five and fifty-five years, and the most recent of which is thirty years old, is not a self-evident good, and merits discussion.

When Leo Spitzer died in 1960 he had published some 800 items, mostly articles and reviews, in five languages. David Bellos has selected six of them, translated those not originally written in English, tidied up footnotes and references and generally done an exemplary editorial job turning his raw material into a homogeneous collection of essays on seventeenth-century French literature. There are however problems, as he is the first to admit. Throughout his fifty years of learned writing Spitzer "left no one great book" and always insisted that "scholarship was dialogue", whereas "Professor Bellos disarmingly admits that this is 'the sort of book Spitzer never published and would not have wanted to publish.' Moreover Spitzer held that 'scholarship should be on the edge of nothingness...' not a marble

effigy, but a model of its creator's struggle... Insofar as later critics have absorbed Spitzer's insights and offered insights of their own, it would seem that his work has been its purpose and belongs to history. Bellos concludes his excellent introduction (from which all the above quotations are taken) with the statement "Spitzer's criticism... contains... a moral lesson of greater import than any of the particular lessons given on Racine and La Fontaine" and this is his "moral integrity... fundamental honesty."

While it is always pleasant to record any man's integrity, as well as his genius, such tribute seems more appropriate to a Festschrift or obituary than to a commemoration in the shape of a new publication more than twenty years after the author's death. The only real justification for this enterprise, admirably executed as it is, would be that Spitzer still has something to tell readers today about the style and language (virtually the only theme of the essays) of Corneille, Racine, La Fontaine and Saint-Simon, something which remains fresh and is not to be found elsewhere. It does not require excessive generosity to concede that he has, but it is not necessarily petty to enter some substantial reservations.

The two essays on Racine show both Spitzer's strength and weakness. The first, "Racine's Classical *piano*" (*Dampfing* in the original) consists in a brilliant and extended (more than 100 pages) analysis of a score or so of stylistic devices whereby Racine achieves that modulation, or "rhetoric of attenuation" which Spitzer identifies as his distinctive characteristic. Use of indefinite article, of demonstrative pronoun, of third person (to take only the first three headings) is shown to contribute to an overall sense of restraint under tension, which explains (in Spitzer's view) why "Racine remains for ever close to us because he is eternally distant." As an analysis of Racine's language the essay is a model, and here frequent re-reading, but it shows how a great author writes, not why he is great. Answering his critics later, Spitzer appended a note, defending himself against the charge that he does "not adequately insert

Racine's style into the period style to which it belongs" by claiming that "this point here really is that I do not deal with the history of ideas" which he had argued against in his "falsism and determinism." In fact that is not the point, nor is it true: Peter France in his excellent *Racine's Rhetoric* (1964) pays due tribute to Spitzer, especially to his honesty, but makes comparisons with secondary tragic writers (and also Corneille) to show how Racine exploits currently available conventions more effectively, so that the reader gains a valuable critical perspective quite lacking in Spitzer.

As to history of ideas, the not very felicitous comparison between Polyucte, IV, iii and the medieval *Saint-Alexis* concludes with the remark "Corneille, separated from the Middle Ages only by the Renaissance", which sounds like *Gästegeschichte* at its crudest. Similarly disturbing is the use of "baroque" in the essay on the *écrit de Théramène*: "Phèdre is the ideal type of a baroque tragedy." "Racine, the baroque poet, is a French poet" and, in general, French classicism is, for Spitzer, really baroque. As with the statement about Corneille, such opinions cannot merely be dismissed as wrong or meaningless, but they are, to say the least, obfuscating. As a means of promoting dialogue such articles have obvious value, but presented as unanswerable monologue they may just mislead.

If these essays were now appearing for the first time only the most captious critic would fail to acknowledge that they represent stylistic criticism of the highest order, and as such make a real contribution to our appreciation of Racine and the others. In his own day Spitzer was criticized for excessive emphasis on linguistic criteria, but it is the tacit assumptions of a quite obsolete cultural history, the pervasively idiosyncratic terminology (e.g. Baroque) which make this a book to be treated by students, and even teachers, with great caution. The history of criticism has gained a considerably edited volume, but one may doubt whether the delayed impact of these essays on the modern reader will, on balance, bring truth and beauty that much nearer.

D. G. Coleman

I. D. MCFARLANE and IAN MCLAREN (Editors)

Montaigne: Essays in memory of Richard Sayce
174pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
£17.50.
0 19 815769 X

A reader has to give of his intellect and sensibility when trying to rediscover all the literal and symbolical meanings of words in their historical and aesthetic perspective. In this sense, Montaigne is a "committed" author, destined to be read on all the different levels he gives to his words. We "speak" Montaigne's words in order to "try" at the thought they contain; we are rehearsing the verbal fabric in our own minds.

Montaigne knows that he is a "difficult" author: the frequency with which he comes back to words like *obliquement*, *biais*, *consanguinité* and *consanguinité*, *gloier* and *entregloier* is a proof of this. And it is this also that makes the excellent article by Terence Cave in this book so stimulating. He sees Montaigne as being, above all, a highly intelligent reader, both of others — "the *Essays* are simply the orchestration of a vast reading experience" and of himself. Cave argues finely that the way an unusually skilled reader can "sniff" a characteristically Montaignean manner is through long reading and re-reading of the *Essays* so that the "linking thread" is itself produced by shadow of a writer reading and re-reading his text in search of a linking thread. The literary self-consciousness of Montaigne makes the perfect reader "one who, in following the traces of the self-portrait and understanding their function, learns that whatever of value he is to gain from the text must be organized in terms of his own experience, not Montaigne's."

From the lofty peaks of criticism such as this one turns to the other articles in this collection, bearing in mind Cave's words that Montaigne makes "few allowances for the naïve or inattentive reader." Whenever Montaigne practices literary criticism he does so in the manner of Lewis, Richards, Empson, or Knights four hundred years later; so that we are plunged into "dense reading." An example is the fine analysis of a passage from the *Aeneid* and one from Lucratus in "Sur des Vers de Virgile" (III.5) where he "chews" Virgil's and Lucratus' words, and uses both passages to excite his imagination sexually and to recall other Latin love poetry. This makes the sloppy use of "passage" (p48) — where it ought to be "passages" — in Margaret McGowan's.

For his part, Blavier clings to his oddballs. Did the act of writing down their obsessive fantasies exacerbate, alleviate or simply register their affliction? Kafka spoke of writing as liberation from murderous urges. Blavier thinks that, for some, publication was cathartic and prevented their being locked away. Some achieve striking metaphors for their visions: "Le soleil est un despotisme de l'univers. C'est un sépulchre blanc qui au-dessus de soi pleure d'ossements et de pourriture. Le soleil est excrementiel, c'est la fosse d'aisance de notre système." Another, in a spiritual high rather than a low, can still come up with an unconsciously Swiftian proposal for "Philanthropie": the sacrifice of their own flesh by volunteers to victims of hunger, based on the reasonable premise that it is better to feed our fellows than the worms.

Mary Montaigne, only a glimmering thought. If Montaigne's amorphous private edition of his thoughts even this can deviate into a kind of sense: "Incohérences fauves", métaphores chocs, anachronisme, écoulement infantile, superbe résultat." Blavier brings his raving ontology to a close with a sobering section on conditions of life in asylums, including one Zola's, "l'impudique" description of excrement. The refrain of the volume, which is hard to quarrel with, is: why have they made me mad? One mused pathetically: "S'il n'y avait personne, tout le monde serait heureux."

After recording his disappointment over his own research into "fous littéraires", Queneau, a true "fou littéraire" (even if, what he dreamed of was an "Encyclopédie des Sciences Imaginaires"), concluded: "Il faut avoir tout dit. I did my level best to read everything in this fascinating and tedious book; and I shall fully, in compiling it."

Jean-Yves Tadié, who has previously explored the margins of fiction in his *Roman poétique* (1978), now turns his attention to its newly rediscovered core, mostly by a study of four of its greatest exponents, Dumas, Verne, Stevenson and Conrad. But he defines his "object" — "le roman d'aventure littéraire" — in such a way as

article rather revealing. The article of David Maskell, tracing the evolution of the *Essays* from 1580 to 1595, errs in calling the ink in the Bordeaux Copy/Manuscript "golden brown" when in fact there is a great variety of shades in the colour. For example, a heavily corrected ink in black ink, so heavily impressed that lines have marked the following page as well, surely makes an emotional point about the death of La Botz. The fact that the ink is the same as that Moutaigne crossed off all the lines at the same time.

A question of translation arises in I. D. McFarlane's article, where he writes "happiness (though not an entirely satisfactory translation of *vulupté*)". The whole concept of *vulupté* in the last few pages of *l'expérience* (III.13) takes us into the most intimate beliefs, desires and *de vivre* of Montaigne. The word which indicates libido, concupiscence, or carnal desire are exceedingly numerous in the *Essays* — *libido*, *concupiscence*, *alouchement*, *volupté*, *desbordement*, *extreme volupté*, etc. — and furthermore the 1580-2 marginalia show very clearly, by crossing off and redistribution, that Montaigne was concerned with the different variations in style, level and tone around the essential word *vulupté* up to his death in 1592. For example III.5, what does one make of the fact that *vulupté* is crossed out and *concupiscence* inserted? Or the change from *le desbauche* to *vulupté*. "Happiness" seems the wrong word here.

The book as a whole is backward-looking using the Pléiade edition of the *Essays*, which is very rough or even wrong in transcription of Latin quotations and bit haphazard about the *a, b, c* and passages. Most scholars outside Britain use the Villey/Saulnier edition — which is, at least, more rigorous. There are too many clichés here too: "It is a wonder then..." or "I should not be surprised that..." and too many unnecessary examples.

It is fitting that this memorial volume for Richard Sayce, a notably wide-ranging scholar and bibliographer, should have been devoted to his favourite author.

Hurrying along

Annette Lavers

JEAN-YVES TADIÉ

Le Roman d'aventures
220pp. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
2 13 037455 7

"There is a beauty, a material beauty of the tale type, which clever critics nowadays long and love to forget" wrote Robert Louis Stevenson to J. M. Barrie. Narratology, or the study of narrative, took a decisive turn when it came to ignore what was always considered the jewel in the fictional crown, the novelist's characters, to concentrate on a story's actions or events. These were best studied in genres regarded as inferior: myths, folktales or adventure stories.

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again to make poetry the vehicle of criterion: not only by the presence of style or by the boundaries between separate such novels from romance, fiction, fantastic tales, spy thriller or historical romances, but by the fact of imagination. Despite the swift flow of events which characterizes the genre, its more inspired practitioners can express a sense of depth in their existence. This is an exhilarating "world of beginnings", where "unabashed elegance on elementary passions and the possible" is not in vain in an everyday life marked by the protracted and the self-allowing enjoy identification with the hero's being, confident of his survival, whereas death haunts even the happy endings.

What makes this book exceptional is a reflective resonance which might well have brought a lot of academic writing. Though not really abundant on the meaning of the genre, the "valuing of difference" on James' art, "deep like that of a scholar" and "expanding a scholar's contribution but often for its own sake" both read and re-read for its own sake.

Sources which sustain

Geza Vermes

CHAIM RAPHAEL

The Springs of Jewish Life
288pp. Chanto and Windus. £12.50.
0 701 2335 4

Short, untechnical, easily readable, *The Springs of Jewish Life* is not another "straight" history, the author assures us in his opening sentence. Its "central issue" suggested to him by his publisher, a non-Jewish lady, concerns the sources of the dynamism and will to live that have sustained the Jews against so many odds throughout so many centuries.

If not "straight", this work by Chaim Raphael is still a history in as much as it tells the story of the formation, roughly between the Babylonian exile (sixth century) and the Talmud (c. AD 500), and development of the "heritage" acknowledged as Judaism by generations of Jews until the present time, a heritage from which they have derived their "Jewish consciousness". Together with an intense devotion to the Bible and to its ideal of life sanctified through obedience to the Law received by Moses on Sinai, this "heritage" is represented as being composed of a potent sense of kinship, and also a compelling attachment to

Jerusalem — to the Temple and its ceremonies while the sanctuary stood, to Zion as a dream between AD 70 and modern times, and to the state of Israel, which is now for many a secular substitute for ancient religious and poetic aspirations. A further important but negative element noted by Raphael is the quality of separation, of difference, that marks it. In the centuries of diaspora existence, this trait has served as well to characterize Judaism as to protect and preserve it.

Not every part of this "heritage" is genuinely Jewish in origin: Raphael knows that much of it was assimilated from Babylon, Persia and Greece. Contact and conflict with foreign civilizations, especially with Seleucid Hellenism in the second century BC and with Rome in two wars (AD 66-70 and 132-35), contributed, it is pointed out, to the development among Jews of a tendency to turn inward, to rely on their own resources, to opt for particularism against openness and cosmopolitanism.

Chaim Raphael sees Christianity as the chief catalyst of Jewish self-definition. It was against a hostile, critical and subsequently oppressive and persecuting Church that Israel had to assert itself and to survive during the long centuries of exile. The Rabbinic, are constantly told, shaped Judaism with their eyes on the Christian schism:

The Palestine problem

William J. Fishman

JOSEPH GORNY

The British Labour Movement and Zionism 1917-1948
251pp. Cass. £17.50.
0 7146 3162 0

Looking back over the long years of his involvement in the international labour movement, Fenner Brockway revealed that "Gos of the most difficult questions was Palestine. To most problems one can apply general principles; but to Palestine — no. By no other question have I been so puzzled." He could have been speaking for most Labour and ILP leaders exposed to the vicissitudes of the Zionist cause. According to British Labour's response to Poal Tzion (Socialist Zionism) after 1917, Joseph Gorny's attempt to explore, and thereby explain their relationship, brings to light the underlying clash of personalities, which together with diverse political, ideological and personal allegiances formed by both.

It was, paradoxically, Arab intransigence against the Balfour Declaration with its promise of a National Home for the Jews. Both parties construed a different meaning to that statement, and it was this divergence that perpetuated tensions and mistrust, with mutual recriminations leading to short-term ruptures in times of crisis. For Poal Tzion Balfour's open door to Jewish immigration would constitute a Jewish national state. The Labour Party's interpretation led to an ambivalence in policy. It agreed with freedom of immigration but was suspicious of the concept of a national home, which was viewed as a government ploy to protect imperialist interests; that, by setting up a Jewish state under British hegemony, it would help sustain the vital route to India.

Initially, in 1920, the leaders of the Labour Party had emphasized their unqualified support for Zionism in a letter to Lloyd George before the San Remo Conference on Palestine. It went beyond the terms of Balfour by stating that the area concerned be "recognized as the national home of the Jewish People" and, by supporting the Mandate openly, rejected the view of those who abjured Zionism as an "adventurist" or "imperialist" project. It was Ramsay MacDonald's visit to the Jewish communal settlements in 1921, and his subsequent report, "A Socialist's view of the Jewish people," that helped cement the both read and re-read for its own sake.

both parties. He had witnessed the new Jew, the *kibbutznik*: "an idealist and a worker. He has vision... and love enters much into his labour." The Middle East was at the crossroads, with modern social forces undermining the rotten fabric of an outmoded feudal society. Jewish immigration was the catalytic revolutionary factor accelerating the process, though it was one which inevitably had to end in an Arab-Jewish confrontation. Yet there were open reservations in MacDonald's stance which he shared with some of his colleagues: his distrust of a Jewish plutocracy ("whether as a sweeper or a financier, he is an exploiter of anything he can squeeze"), whom he regarded as a minority but as a great danger to the Zionist cause, and his growing realization that the Palestine Arabs would need guaranteed rights for residency. Embarrassed by these contradictions, "he put his faith in the efficacy of moderate Zionist policy, and in Jewish desire to establish practical cooperation with the Arabs" — a grand illusion, which would periodically shake the foundations of Zionist-Labourite collaboration when political realities demanded conflicting allegiances from both.

Neither the impact of the Holocaust nor the triumph of Labour in 1945 would release the post-war British government from this restraint. Atlee and Bevin were prisoners of the tradition, although more ready to acquiesce than the more radical rank-and-file led by Bevan and Crossman, who remained true to their comrades of Poal Tzion ("the left wingers with their Socialist ideology displayed a degree of pragmatic idealism while more conservative Labourites remained dogmatic pragmatists").

Partition was finally imposed, despite British objection, not only, as the author contends, as a consequence of armed conflict, but by the timely and decisive intervention of the new superpower, the United States. In the final count, relations between the Zionist and British Labour movements were a marginal factor in the making of the state of Israel.

In this penetrating analysis, Joseph Gorny, an Israeli professor, has achieved a remarkable fairness and balance in his portrayal of characters and interpretation of events within an era that still arouses fierce partisan controversy.

they removed from the "heritage" all that featured prominently in what they saw as a rival faith.

Many are sure to find Raphael's account original and fascinating. Nevertheless the structure of his composition conceals two flaws that affect his peculiar approach to the sources of Jewish life throughout. The first is inherent in the genre of "remembered history": only matters preserved by tradition and folk memory count. Conversely, whatever the Rabbis or later guardians of Judaism decided to omit from their synthesis is qualified by them (and by our author) as "non-Jewish". Thus we are led to such curious inconsistencies as the denial of the Jewishness of the Apocrypha, although written by Jews for Jews, to Hebrew, Aramaic and occasionally in Greek, because they were preserved for many centuries by the Christian Church alone in (Jewish) Greek versions. In other words, "Jewishness" has to carry a traditional stamp of approval in Raphael's view. At the same time, he himself describes the Rabbinic religious synthesis as possessing not only "resilient strength", but also "appalling narrowness". He implicitly admits, therefore, that a great proportion of the earlier religious values belonging to the spiritual wealth of Judaism, indeed whole streams of thought such as visionary apocalypticism, were

officially discontinued. Mysticism and charismatic piety suffered equally, though many such movements survived clandestinely, surfacing from time to time as Messianic mysticism. Kabbalah, Sabbatian messianism and since the eighteenth century Hasidism. Prophecy — the principal victim, S.W. Baron's lame explanation that prophetic preaching was inappropriate under foreign domination is adopted by Raphael and reproduced without comment. (But what about the exilic and post-exilic prophets who were active in Babylon and during the Persian rule?)

The second flaw in Raphael's presentation, though not entirely his own creation since many have adopted the same stand before him, similarly distorts his overall picture. To put it bluntly, the interrelation between Christianity and Judaism is erroneously conceived. The prime responsibility here probably lies with the assumption on the part of the historians of the nascent Church that Christianity was an important factor in the development of Rabbinic Judaism as Judaism was in that of primitive Christianity. They imagine that the Curse on the Heretics, supposedly introduced around the end of the first century AD into what was the Jewish daily prayer *par excellence*, the Eighteen Benedictions, was aimed at the followers of Jesus. In fact, as Raphael knows but fails to bear in mind, it is much more likely that the excommunication was directed towards all the non-conformist groups in the course of the successful Pharisaic-Rabbinic attempt at unification which started after AD 70 and transformed by the end of the second century the various religious parties of the late Second Temple era into a single orthodoxy. It was thus not exclusively or even primarily against Christianity that Judaism asserted itself, but against Sadducees, Essenes, Hellenists and the like, flourishing and influential in the first century AD. Neither was the stand taken by the Rabbis against Greek language and culture — a stand to which some more mythical than real — directly motivated by the existence of Christianity. There were, after all, Rabbinic efforts to "improve" the Greek Septuagint version of the Bible that probably pre-date Christianity. Moreover, Aquila was the author in the second century of a painfully literal translation of the Bible, much in favour among Greek-speaking Jews and open to the finicky legal exegesis of Rabbi Akiba and his colleagues.

Old Anatolia

John A. C. Greppin

SUSIE HOGGASIAN VILLA and MARY KILBOURNE MATOSSIAN

Armenian Village Life before 1914
198pp. Detroit: Wayne State University Press (distributed in the UK by TABS). \$15.95.
0 8143 1700 6

The topic of this book is Armenian folk customs as they were in Turkey before the massacre of 1915, presented through the reminiscences of forty-eight elderly villagers, mostly women, all of whom eventually migrated to the area around Detroit, in the industrial Mid-West of the United States.

These are the recollections of a largely untutored people, living not in cities or towns, but either in lowlands, in villages of two or three hundred houses, or in the highlands, in settlements of twenty or thirty farms. It relates a way of life that has vanished not only for the Armenians but even for the Turks and Kurds who replaced them in these "ancestral" lands. The seven chapters describe: the organization of the village, and within it the clan and the household; married life; child-rearing; religion; and health. The viewpoint is largely feminine, and these vanished folk-ways are related to us affectionately, and with understanding.

We learn much. Sexual morality was energetically upheld: in the very few instances where there was evidence of promiscuity the community response was strong, and even vicious. One informant relates, "If any woman were unchaste she would be beaten and her face mud-died; she would then be put on a horse and sent out of the village — to Russia or someplace." And another: "No one would marry her after that and her child was not considered a human being."

Because these extended families lacked physical privacy, normal emotions had frequently to be repressed. Family members refrained from showing not only anger, but affection. A parent did not hug or kiss her children in front of her elders. For the male the taboo was even stronger: the story is related of how an informant's father, on the death of his small son, hugged the corpse and cried, "I couldn't love you when you were alive. Let me love you now."

Taking these points into account, it would seem that in describing the part played by Christianity in the shaping of traditional Judaism, Raphael has adopted anachronically, as far as the first and second centuries are concerned, the partisan views of the third and fourth-century Jewish teachers contemplating a developed or even dominating Church. Pharisaic-Rabbinic Judaism evolved, I would submit, in reaction not so much to Jewish, let alone Gentile, Christianity, as to Sadducean conservatism, Essene sectarianism, Jewish-Hellenistic liberalism and the like.

Experts in Jewish history will wish that Raphael had taken greater care to avoid slips. These are not grave, but they are many and sometimes irritating. The Hebrew text of the *Wisdom of Ben Sira* and the *Damascus Document* were first discovered in 1896 and not at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Book of Enoch was written in Aramaic, as the Dead Sea discoveries have shown, and not in Hebrew or Aramaic or a mixture of both. Ecclesiasticus did not survive in the Church's Greek rendering; it was translated from the Hebrew by the author's grandson, who lived in Egypt a century and a half before the birth of Christianity. Some of the allusions to the New Testament and to Christian teachings are also inaccurate. Gamaliel is mentioned in Acts 5, not 23. Herod's command to massacre the innocents was not inspired by his fury on discovering that Jesus and his parents had fled, but on realizing that the Magi, who were to have identified the new-born Messiah, had failed to report (cf. Matthew 2:16). The notion of immaculate conception seems to be used incorrectly. References to Josephus' works are cited according to at least three styles. Extracts from Brown's renowned *History* are occasionally reproduced so greatly out of context as to be misleading (cf. page 174, note 3, in which, in addition, a wrong page reference is given — page 87 instead of 146). The name of Fergus Schiller, my colleague in the revision of *Schiller's History*, is repeatedly given as "P. Miller", though he does once become "F. Miller".

These reservations and criticisms apart, Chaim Raphael's pleasant volume — be it added to it as "A Cheerful Look at the Jews" — affords a quick and amplified account of two-and-a-half millennia of Jewish life which will be welcomed and appreciated by many interested lay readers, Jews and non-Jews.

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Medical views were unenlightened. A menstruating woman was forbidden to step over a child's sacrifice and a candle lit at a holy spring were thought to correct diseases of the eye; a special stone would make a woman fertile and cause milk to flow; certain trees were magical. There was no clear line between Armenian Christianity and pagan sorcery.

These lives, lived on the vast Anatolian plain, were somehow brutal, yet they also produced the cohesiveness that bound the Armenians tightly together, and which keeps their culture alive in their modern exile.

